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# A Text-Book on Prophecy

By

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"The Antidote to Christian Science,"  
"Primers of the Faith," "Prophecy  
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## The Book and How to Use It

THE war with Germany greatly quickened popular interest in the prophetic books of the Bible, and the *Christian Herald*, New York, asked the author for a series of articles on the subject. They numbered eight, and bore the general title of "The Mountain Peaks of Prophecy."

Before the conclusion of the series the attention awakened seemed to justify an increase of the number of articles to twelve, and later that number was doubled.

Questions from correspondents began to multiply which were replied to in some of the later articles, and as the whole assumed more and more the form of class instruction, the management of the paper urged the present publication in book form for wider and more permanent use.

One or two articles have been omitted here as being rather ephemeral in character and not essential to the rounding out of the subject; but those that appear do so, with few exceptions, in their original order, and with practically no change in the text. Repetitions and recapitulations incident to the serial form of composition have had to be retained, but it is thought these may be found not undesirable where the study of the book is pursued in classes as is contemplated in some instances, and for which the

## 6 THE BOOK AND HOW TO USE IT

questions have been added at the close of each chapter.

In class study it would be preferable for each member of the class to possess a copy of the book, and in home preparation to read and reread the assigned lesson, being careful to examine the Scripture references in every case. Then when the class meets the teacher should propound the questions as prepared, and let that exercise be followed by one of general discussion and interchange of views.

Where it is inconvenient for books to be provided for all the class, the teacher, after careful preparation, might read the lesson to his students when assembled, adding such explanatory remarks as seemed desirable, and then ask the questions. The correct answer might not come as readily in this as in the other case, but the errors and mistakes of some would possess a pedagogic value of their own, and contribute most interestingly to the general discussion at the close.

In the preparation of the work the author sought to avoid as far as possible the expression of merely his own opinions in the premises, and to give Scriptural authority for all his interpretations of the prophets. Where he did not know, or was in doubt he said so, and yet the necessary limitations of space in the periodical may have resulted in a flavour of dogmatism here and there which was not intended. Generous consideration is asked for this, as the author fully recognizes the merits of other interpretations than his own, and values the scholarship and judgment with which he is not able always to agree.

Notwithstanding, he hopes this simple text-book may be useful to beginners, and stimulate them to broader and profounder study of that "word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).



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## I

# THE SEED OF THE WOMAN, OR THE FIRST PROMISE OF REDEMPTION

## I

**F**ROM the beginning let us keep in mind that the Bible is not a history of creation, nor a history of the world, nor of the human race, but a history of redemption—the redemption of the race and of the earth on which it dwells. This history begins to be recorded at the moment the necessity for redemption appears; that is, when man first fell into sin, as indicated in Genesis 3. At the fifteenth verse of that chapter God is pronouncing His curse upon the serpent, who represented Satan, and says:

*“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”*

This verse is the first promise of redemption, and has sometimes been called the protevangelium, a Greek word, meaning the earliest proclamation of the Gospel.

When God says, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman,” “thee” refers primarily to the serpent, and yet the context shows that some one other than the serpent is ultimately in mind.

That one is Satan, as we gather from Revelation 12:9 and 20:2, where the serpent is introduced again

and identified with "the devil and Satan." Thus, at the very beginning of his attempt upon man, Satan is frustrated in his plan. He thought he had entered into a harmonious and perpetual and successful compact with man against God, but finds that it is broken ere it begins to work. It is enmity and not friendship that shall exist. Happy are we if we appreciate this enmity, and in our daily contact find daily conflict!

The enmity is to be not only between the serpent and the woman, let it be observed, but "between thy seed and her seed."

The "seed" of the serpent is the generation of evil men in all the days, as John's words in Matthew 3:7, and those of Jesus in Matthew 13:38; 23:33 and John 8:44 firmly establish. Compare also Acts 13:10 and 1 John 3:8.

In like manner the "seed" of the woman is the generation of the righteous, as we may gather from Psalm 22:30 and elsewhere, although its stricter application is to the person of Jesus Christ. The emphasis on the word "woman" in the text suggests His virgin birth; but whether or not, the whole story of the Bible, and hence the whole story of redemption, gathers around this "seed." We find it referred to in the call of Abraham and the founding of the nation of Israel, Genesis 12:3; 15:5, and elsewhere. Isaac, the son of Sarah, was the immediate realization of the promise, and yet he was only the type of the true Isaac who was to come. This is proven by Paul's words to the Galatians (3:16), where he says: "Now to Abraham and his

seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

It was this seed to whom the prophet Nathan referred in revealing the divine promise to David that his son should sit upon his throne and that his kingdom should be established forever (2 Sam. 7:12, compared with Ps. 132:11).

It was this seed that Isaiah prophesied of (7:14), and Jeremiah, and Micah, and Malachi. Indeed "to Him bear all the prophets witness."

## II

But the text continues: "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Satan and his seed, considered as one totality, succeeded in bruising the Saviour's heel all through His earthly career, from the murderous antipathy of Herod to the expiring groan on the cross. But after all it was only a bruising of the heel; it was not deadly, nor destructive either of the Saviour Himself or the great purpose of redemption for which He came into the world.

On the other hand, the Saviour bruised Satan's head, a type of the deadly final overcoming power of Christ.

This bruising of Satan's head may be said to have begun when Christ overcame him in the wilderness. Another stage of it was reached in His resurrection, when He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross (Col. 2:15). Another will be reached when,

at His second coming, Satan shall be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Rev. 20:2). But the final stage will be reached when, after the millennial age, he shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and be "tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

It is of the deepest interest to true believers to note that the Holy Spirit, through Paul, unites Christ and them in one totality, so far as the bruising of Satan's head is concerned. In Romans 16:20 it is promised that the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. Long has he tormented us, and more especially from the beginning of our Christian life has he shown himself the adversary of our souls; but, as Bishop Moule says: "Let us meet his inroads and attacks in the name of Him who has made peace for us and works peace in us, and his afflictions will soon be over."

### III

After this first promise of redemption, God leaves man to himself, as it were, for a period of 1,500 years, more or less. There is no further promise, prophecy or prediction till we come to the days of Noah. All this time man has an opportunity to return to God if he will, and no doubt in the fullest fellowship and blessing, on the basis of that first promise of redemption through a personal Redeemer.

But the result is well known. At the end of that period, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually. And

it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth" (Gen. 6:5-7). The deluge followed, and only "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

But the deluge did not change man's nature, evidence of which is soon seen thereafter in the drunkenness of Noah and the licentiousness of his son Ham (Gen. 9:19-25). Practically the same conditions maintained in the whole race as before that awful judgment, and issued at length in what with truth has been called "an organized political and religious revolt against God." This refers to the event of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11).

As men again multiplied on the face of the earth, union and consolidation for some reason came to be considered of prime importance. And on the plain of Shinar they said, "Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4).

The attempt was a failure. "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower," language of sublime simplicity suited to the early mind of man, and expressive of the interposing providence of God. This was a providence of judgment, but, as always, judgment tempered with mercy. Their language was confounded and their union dissipated, but they themselves were not destroyed.

Nevertheless they were abandoned to their own evil ways. "Professing themselves to be wise, they

became fools." "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:18-32), and "the loathsome moral condition of Sodom and Gomorrah is a miniature picture of the debasing corruption that followed" ("When God Comes Down to Earth," Stroh).

It now looked as though God's name and God's truth would be forgotten in the earth. It now looked as though that first promise of redemption would come to nought. It now looked as though the seed of the serpent had prevailed. But the next study will teach us differently. Our next "mountain peak" will present us with a clearer vision of the sweep and purpose of God's grace.

---

### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Define the Bible, stating what it is and what it is not.
2. Where does the history of redemption begin?
3. How would you identify Genesis 3:15?
4. Give Scriptural proof of the identity of the serpent and Satan.
5. Who are meant by the "seed" of the serpent?
6. Who distinctively is the "seed" of the woman?
7. Trace the history of the "seed of the woman" through the Old Testament.
8. What is meant by Satan's bruising Christ's heel?
9. Give the history of the bruising of Satan's head.

10. What is the next great Bible prophecy and its fulfillment?
11. What is the next outstanding event after the deluge?
12. Describe the conditions leading up to that event.
13. Describe the conditions following.



## II

### GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, OR WHY HE CHOSE ISRAEL

#### I

**T**HE preceding chapter carried us forward to the story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11, at which time it appeared as if the rebellion and iniquity of the race had driven the name and the truth of God out of the earth which He had made.

But it was not so. It is written that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29), which, for our present purpose, means that His original promise of the redemption of the race had not been forgotten, and that His mind had not changed concerning it.

But the period has now arrived for a change in the method of its execution. This does not mean that it is a new method, so far as God Himself is concerned. It is not a surprise to Him in the sense that He is obliged to adopt it because of a previous failure. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). What He is now about to do had been not only foreknown but foreordained.

He is about to call into being a secondary instrument for the redemption of the race. The primary one is the Seed of the woman, as we saw in our first

study: the Personal Redeemer, the Son of God. But the secondary one is the nation of Israel, whose beginnings take their rise in the call and history of Abraham (Gen. 12 to 25).

And for what purpose did God desire Israel? She was to be a repository for His truth in the earth, and to her was committed the sacred oracles. She was to be a channel for the coming of the Personal Redeemer to the earth, and she gave the world its Saviour. And she was to be a national witness to God before the other peoples of the earth. His unity, His supremacy, His character were to be made known through her, that all the ends of the earth might fear Him, and that the nations might "be glad and sing for joy" (Ps. 67:4).

This brings us to our second mountain peak, where "the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Gen. 12:1).

It was not of merit, but of grace, that this call came to Abraham. He dwelt in paganism, and was personally a sinner like all the rest of mankind. No partiality was shown to him above other men, in the sense that God loved him more than them. He was chosen for this place because God loved the whole race of men and desired to save them by this means. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father," the priests of Israel were taught to say, and although when first spoken this referred to Jacob, yet its application to his grandfather Abraham would have been equally true. The sequel will disclose this.

## II

Look now at the threefold blessing on Abraham. There was, first, a blessing for himself: "I will bless thee, and make thy name great" (Gen. 12:2). Little is required to remind us of the fulfillment of this promise. Whether we follow Abraham in his temporary sojourns into Egypt and Philistia, or abide with him in the peaceful tents of Canaan, or accompany him to battle against the confederacy of Chedorlaomer, it was still the same. God was his Friend (Isa. 41:8), and kings honoured him, and his silver and gold increased and his cattle and land multiplied. Nor was it only in things physical but also in things spiritual that this was true. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6); and so transcendent a blessing was this that it becomes the New Testament exemplar of Gospel grace. Christ was made a curse for us, says the Apostle Paul, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:13, 14). Abraham's name is great.

There was, secondly, a blessing for his direct posterity—"I will make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 12:2); "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth" (Gen. 13:16). Israel has not been great, numerically or territorially, as compared with other nations; but she has been great in God's dealings with her, in the wonders wrought in her history, in the things she has accomplished and in the influence she has exerted, not only on the nations contiguous to her but on those of the whole earth. And, as we

shall see, her history is not ended, but only temporarily suspended. When the present interregnum has expired, and Israel again takes up her mission in Palestine, the career outlined for her is more glorious than her past. She is to be the head of the nations and not the tail (Amos 9:11-15). Moreover, as our former study pointed out, believers on Jesus Christ are the spiritual seed of Abraham, "a multitude whom no man can number."

There was, in the third place, a blessing for the whole world—"Thou shalt be a blessing"; "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2, 3). This also has been literally fulfilled. All who came into right relationship with Abraham personally were blessed because of that relationship. All who came into right relationship with Israel, the nation that proceeded out of his loins, were blessed for the same reason. But very specially all who have come into right relationship with Jesus Christ, the spiritual seed of Abraham, have been so blessed, and literally they are of "all the families of the earth." However, this part of the promise also awaits complete fulfillment in the time to come; for some day "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

### III

But there are two contributing agencies to the execution of this threefold blessing upon Abraham. The first was the gift of a land for him and his posterity to dwell in, and the second, the treatment

which God purposed to accord to other individuals and nations as they treated Abraham and his descendants.

"The land that I will show thee" is the way in which God first alludes to it in Genesis 12:1. Later, when Abraham came into Canaan, the Lord appeared unto him, and said: "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. 12:7). Still later, after his return from Egypt and subsequent separation from Lot, the Lord appeared unto him once more and, repeating the promise, said, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever. . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee" (Gen. 13:15-17). Finally for our present purpose, God makes a solemn covenant with Abraham, describing and defining the boundaries of the land, "from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18-20).

These boundaries, it may be said, are much more extensive than the territory Israel has ever yet occupied, indicating the greater future in store for her when she occupies the whole. It is scarcely necessary to speak of its fruitfulness, caring for a large population in the past, and capable of caring for a larger one in the future when, by the special blessing of God, "the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed" (Amos 9:13). Its location also is a strategic one. God, in Ezekiel, calls it the "middle of the earth," and the national and international struggles for the possession of its capital in the past bear out that

description, to say nothing of the covetous eyes that are resting upon it to-day.

Some have found fault with God for wresting this land from its earlier possessors to bestow it upon Israel. But they have not considered His motive for doing so, nor its justifying cause. As to His motive, we are always to keep in view His purpose to redeem the race, and the use He would make of Israel to that end. He was not giving this land to Israel for her own sake, as we have seen, but for the world's sake.

On the other hand, the occupants of the land, known in general terms as the Canaanites, had utterly forfeited its possession. You are a landlord, let us say; and you have a tenant who, with means abundant for the purpose, persistently refuses to pay your rent. Moreover, he has repaid your unwonted consideration for him by abusing your property into the bargain. Patience has ceased to be a virtue, and in the sight of both God and man you are justified in his ejection by due process of law. Nay, you are an unwise administrator of a trust if you fail to exercise your obligation to do so.

God did no more than this; but He did this because, of the peoples of that land, it could be justly said that their cup of iniquity had been filled to overflowing for some time. Moreover, He will act in a similar way and on a larger scale when He again comes down to earth to deal in judgment with the sons of men.

#### IV

But no feature of this prophecy has more practical

concern for us at present than the dealings of God with other individuals and nations as they dealt with Abraham and his descendants. "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Gen. 12:3). The reason is added—"and in thee all the families of the earth shall be blessed." In other words, that this blessing may follow, Abraham and his descendants must be preserved and protected as the divine instrument to that end.

Accordingly, when famine drives Abraham into Egypt and Pharaoh would take Sarah from him, "the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues," so that he was glad to send "him away, and his wife, and all that he had" (Gen. 12:14-20). God makes the enemies of Abraham's son Isaac to be at peace with him. Laban cannot circumvent his grandson Jacob. Prison walls cannot prevent Joseph from being second in the kingdom of Egypt. On a larger scale of operations, Pharaoh and the whole kingdom of the Egyptians are plagued with terrific judgments, until Moses is given liberty to lead the Hebrews, as the descendants of Abraham are now called, out into the land of promise.

Read the early historical books of the Old Testament from Joshua to Kings, and observe that this principle in God's dealings with the nations never varied. Sometimes He used the nations in chastisement of Israel; but when they "helped forward the affliction," that is, when purpose of aggrandizement led them to inflict greater and more prolonged suffering upon Israel than was meet, their time of punish-

ment always came. "It shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isa. 10:12). Thus said the Lord of one of these nations, and thus has He acted towards all of them.

The trouble in the whole Gentile world to-day is attributable to the treatment of Israel or the Jew. Jonah in the whale's belly is a type of disobedient Israel swallowed by the Gentile nations, which can enjoy no comfort until she is emitted and restored again to her own land. And when God begins to bless her again, those nations will be blessed with her. "God shall bless us," says the psalmist, "and all the ends of the earth shall fear him" (Ps. 67:7).

---

### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Quote and apply Romans 11:29.
2. What new stage in the history of redemption is now reached?
3. Name the three purposes for which Israel is chosen.
4. Was this choice of debt or of grace?
5. Name the threefold blessing on Abraham.
6. Describe the fulfillment of the first blessing.
7. Describe that of the second blessing.
8. Describe that of the third blessing.
9. What two agencies were to contribute to the execution of the threefold blessing on Abraham?



10. In what Scriptures are the boundaries of the promised land defined?
11. Describe the territory thus granted to Israel.
12. How would you meet the objections as to the Divine method of its disposal on Israel?
13. Why does God "curse" those who "curse" Israel?
14. How did this "curse" operate in Israel's history?

### III

## GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID, OR THE COMING KINGDOM

### I

**O**UR first mountain peak of prophecy was the first promise of redemption, in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15). Approximately 2,000 years elapsed before the second came into view in the promise to, and the covenant with, Abraham in Canaan (Gen. 12:15). The promise and covenant were a divine means for the execution of the original promise in Eden. Another millennium has very nearly slipped away ere the third mountain peak appears in the history of David.

Abraham has now slept with his fathers. Isaac, his son and the heir of promise, has done likewise. The same is true of Jacob and Joseph, the other patriarchs. Their descendants, the Israelites—or the Hebrews, as they are now called—are a great multitude of people dwelling in Egypt. From their cruel bondage under Pharaoh they are delivered by the hand of Moses. They are settled in Canaan, the land of promise. Hundreds of years have passed in which they are ruled by Judges. But they have desired a king to be set over them like the nations roundabout; and at length David, the son of Jesse, a “man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14), is strongly seated upon the throne.

The Lord has given David rest from all his enemies, and one day, as he meditates upon it in his palace at Jerusalem, there comes into his heart the desire to build a magnificent temple there to the glory of Jehovah. But God will not have it so, and He sends Nathan, the prophet, to reveal His mind to the king. This is recorded in the second book of Samuel, chapter 7. But it is at verse 10, particularly, that the prophecy begins which attaches itself to the covenant God made with Abraham and which carries forward still further the plan for the redemption of the race.

## II

Let us examine this prophecy. God will appoint a place for His people Israel—"a place of their own," in which He will plant them, and from which they will move no more. "Neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more." God will cause them "to rest from all their enemies." Manifestly, the fulfillment of this is still future. They were in "a place of their own" when it was spoken to David, but not as yet were they planted there. They were moved soon afterwards and have been moving ever since. Their time of rest has not come, for "the children of wickedness," *i. e.*, the Gentile nations, have not ceased afflicting them to this day.

But the Lord says further to David, "I will make thee an house." David will not be a builder just now, but God will be a builder, only the house that God will build for David is not a material one of wood and stone, but an earthly dynasty. "I will

set up thy seed after thee . . . and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

This suggests Solomon at first, but really "a greater than Solomon is here." Solomon's kingdom was not established forever. Indeed, the next verse settles the prophecy as applying to Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman promised in Eden, and the seed of Abraham in whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." In that verse, God says, "I will be his father and he shall be my son," and the inspired author of Hebrews quotes this as fulfilled ultimately in the Son of God (Heb. 1:5).

### III

Let us now look for the fulfillment of this prophecy. Solomon, the immediate successor of David, died. In the days of his son, Rehoboam, the kingdom is divided as a divine chastisement upon it for the sin of idolatry which had entered into it. There are two kingdoms now: Israel, or the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and Judah, or the kingdom of the two tribes. Three hundred and fifty years have rolled around since God's covenant with David, and now the Assyrians have come down and carried Israel into captivity, never again to be restored to her own land as a separate kingdom. A century and a half later, or a little less, the same fate is visited upon Judah at the hands of Babylon.

But since God had said that His Son should sit

upon the throne of David, Judah as the kingdom of David must be restored again to make that true. Therefore in seventy years, according to the prophet Jeremiah (29:10), she is permitted to return (2 Chron. 36:22, 23). And now more years pass away, half a millennium indeed, and the promised Son does not appear. Judah is still a vassal, first to Babylon, then to Persia, then to Greece and at length to Rome. But one day, when Cæsar is at the head of that Empire and Herod, the usurper, represents him in Judea, the angel Gabriel is "sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth; to a virgin, espoused to a man whose name is Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

"And the angel said unto her, fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called, the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:26-33).

Surely the hour has struck! But alas! "He came unto his own and his own received him not" (John 1:11). Instead of the crown they offered Him the cross. "He is despised and rejected of men." And they hid, as it were, their faces from Him (Isa. 53:3). He now becomes the nobleman who must go into a far country to receive his kingdom and to return (Luke 19:11). He is crucified,

dead and buried and the mourners go about the streets. Two of His disciples on the way to Emmaus are moaning because they "trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21).

But lo! He has risen from the dead and has appeared to His disciples, going in and out among them for forty days. It must be His purpose, now, to take to Himself the reins of government and set up the promised kingdom. One day they put the question to Him, saying, "Lord, wilt thou at *this* time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

But once more there is disappointment and waiting. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

"And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:7-11).

## IV

Were the disciples mystified? If so, the mystery was deepened afterwards. At first, they went about their business of witnessing, when the Holy Ghost had come upon them, confining their witness to the Jews only. It was to them—the descendants of Abraham—that the kingdom had been promised, and to none other was the Gospel preached.

But a great persecution arose, driving them out of Jerusalem, and they went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:1-4). The Gentiles began to hear it, and with the same results as in the case of the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 11:15).

What could this mean? Was the privilege of the kingdom for them, as well as for the Jews? A council of the church must be called to consider it (Acts 15). Peter at this council relates his experience in the household of Cornelius, the centurion, and Paul and Barnabas also declare "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." When lo! the Holy Spirit comes upon James, the presiding officer, and reveals in outline the whole plan of God in the premises for this age and that which is to come. The mystery at length is solved.

"Men and brethren, hearken unto me," said James. "Simeon (*i. e.*, Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written: After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the

ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, said the Lord who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:13-17).

Study this programme, and see that God is not now, and in this age, setting up the kingdom promised to David, but doing something else. What He is really doing is taking out from among the Gentiles "a people for his name." Or, as collateral Scriptures explain, He is building up His Church which is called the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23). The time will come, and may be very near, when this Body will be complete, and the Church will be taken out of the earth, caught up "to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:16-18). "And to this agree the words of the prophets," as James says; namely, that "after this," or in other words, after the Church has been translated, Christ will return to the earth, and in Him God will set up the kingdom of David which is fallen down. That is to say, God's covenant with David standeth true, as recorded in 2 Samuel 7, but the time is not yet. The Church must be translated first, and Christ must come again.

The next chapter will make this clearer to us, bringing before us as it will the converging line of Gentile history.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. About how much time elapsed between the great event of Genesis 3:15 and that of 12:15?



2. Give the history of the chosen people between the death of Abraham and the Kingship of David.
3. What Scripture contains God's covenant with David?
4. Name the promises in this covenant.
5. Prove that Jesus Christ rather than Solomon is in mind here.
6. Read carefully the first chapter of Hebrews.
7. Trace the history of Israel from Solomon to the Babylonian captivity.
8. Trace the history of Judah from the return to the birth of Jesus.
9. What hindered the fulfillment of Luke 1:33 at that time?
10. Can you recite the parable of the nobleman?
11. What is the promise of Acts 1:11?
12. Give the history of the Church from the ascension of Christ to the first council at Jerusalem.
13. Analyze the divine program as revealed to James.

## IV

# THE "TIMES OF THE GENTILES" AND THE IMPENDING JUDGMENTS

## I

**O**UR fourth study leads us away temporarily from the history of the Jew to that of the Gentile.

The word "Gentile" is commonly used in the Bible as synonymous with the word "nations." It distinguishes all the other nations of the world from the one nation of Israel, which God had chosen for a particular purpose in connection with the redemption of the human race. What this purpose was and is, we defined in the second chapter, entitled "God's Covenant with Abraham."

It ought to be said here that now, and hereafter, we use the name "Israel" interchangeably with "Judah," as indicating the descendants of Abraham after the flesh. The division of the original kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms, mentioned in our last chapter, is no longer necessary to be kept in view, because in the restoration the two are again to be brought together in one (Isa. 11: 12, 13; Hos. 1: 11); and even now they are so blended as to be indistinguishable to the human eye.

It was God's purpose that Israel should be an independent nation and, because of His peculiar relation to her, necessarily dominant in the affairs of earth. But this position of privilege she forfeited by her disobedience and iniquity, as indicated in our last chapter on "God's Covenant with David." In chastisement upon her, God withdrew His directing and protecting care from her in a national capacity at a certain period in time past, and transferred the authority and power incident thereto into the hands of the Gentiles. This period was about 600 B. C., when Nebuchadnezzar was on the throne of Babylon, the record of the transfer being found in Jeremiah 27 and Daniel 2.

## II

This is the story of Jeremiah 27: Judah is as yet located in her own land, but the hour of her captivity is near at hand, though she refuses to believe God's prophet when he tells her so.

In the meantime, Babylon has risen to great power in the East, and is aspiring to world-dominion, with covetous eyes upon the control of the Mediterranean Sea. Like all her successors, she realizes this to be the key to the problem.

But to control the Mediterranean, Babylon must subjugate the smaller nations lying in the path of it, which are Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, all of which are contiguous to Judah. Last, but not least, she must subjugate Judah also.

The nations thus named are not ignorant of her purpose, and at the opening of our chapter we find

them, by their representatives, in international council assembled in the city of Jerusalem. Zedekiah, king of Judah, doubtless is presiding over them.

We can imagine them discussing ways and means. "Preparedness" is their theme. An alliance or a coalition is proposed by them to withstand the oncoming of the conqueror.

But, speaking after the manner of men, God seizes upon the occasion of their meeting to send His prophet to them with a message both in word and symbol. Jeremiah is to make himself "bonds and yokes," or "bands and bars," and put them upon his neck. It appears that he is to make duplicates of them also, and send them to the kings of the countries represented in the conclave. They are to be sent to them by the hands of their representatives at the conclave.

And with these "bonds and yokes" is to go a message to the effect that God has made the earth and the man and beast upon it, and that He has given it to whom it seemed right in His sight. "And now," He adds, "have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant. . . . And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the time of his own land come. . . . And it shall come to pass that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar . . . that nation will I punish . . . until I have consumed them by his hand."

These same words Jeremiah communicates to Zedekiah, king of Judah, saying "Bring your necks

under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.'"

The sequel we know. Turning a deaf ear to the prophet of the Lord, Judah and her king went their own way. And that way was into Babylonian captivity for seventy years. Nay, more; it was into captivity to the Gentiles from that day until this, as Daniel 2 more clearly predicts and reveals.

### III

Turning to Daniel 2, we find that while the allies are conferring in Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar is dreaming in Babylon. But by morning he has forgotten his dream, and its meaning remains a mystery until Daniel is enlightened from above to reveal it to him.

He had seen a colossal metal image, with head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay. A stone, cut out without hands, smote the image upon its feet and brake them in pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away. Then "the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

The interpretation of the dream was this: The image represented the Gentile dominion in the earth from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, *i. e.*, about 600 B. C., down to the end of this age, when Israel shall be restored to her old place, and when the kingdom of

God, otherwise the kingdom of David and the son of David, Jesus Christ, shall be set up on its ruins.

The four different metals of the image represented four world-empires, among which Gentile dominion would be divided in all this time. The head of gold was Babylon; the breast and arms of silver were the Medo-Persian Empire; the belly and thighs of brass were Greece, and the legs and feet of iron were Rome; not papal Rome of course, but political Rome.

The two legs of iron represent the two halves into which the Roman Empire was divided hundreds of years ago; the eastern half with its capital at Constantinople, and the western half with its capital at Rome.

The ten toes represent ten separate kingdoms or nations, into which these two halves of the empire will be divided at the end of this age. The iron represents the monarchical power in those kingdoms or nations, and the clay the democratic power. The two elements "mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave to one another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." In other words, when the Roman Empire shall be found in the form indicated, ten kingdoms (partly monarchic and partly democratic), Gentile dominion as such is doomed, and the day of Israel, or rather the day of the Lord on this earth, begins.

The stone *strikes* the image, indicating a collision of some kind between the Kingdom of God and the

kingdoms of men. Doubtless this is that judgment on the Gentile nations of the time indicated by the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16, and foreshadowed in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25).

The collision *destroys* the image, and brings Gentile dominion to an end. This does not mean the destruction of all the individuals on the earth, but the disintegration of those nations as nations, or the passing of the balance of power out of their hands, thus affording an opportunity for the coming in of that Kingdom of God which "shall stand forever."

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. For what does the word "Gentile" stand?
2. How are the names, "Israel" and "Judah" hereafter used in this text-book?
3. Have you read Isaiah 11:12, 13 and Hosea 1:11?
4. What was God's purpose for Israel and how was it forfeited by her?
5. What chastisement now falls on her and when does it begin?
6. Tell in your own words the story of Jeremiah 27.
7. Recite Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation.
8. If the "image" represented Gentile dominion, what did its four metal parts represent?
9. What about the application of the legs, feet and toes?
10. What is meant by God's Kingdom being set up?

## V

### ISRAEL RESTORED AND RENEWED

#### I

**I**N considering "the Times of the Gentiles" in our last chapter, it was assumed throughout that when those "times" came to an end the time of Israel, as a nation, would begin again; that she would be restored to her own land and be in fellowship with God, through faith in Jesus of Nazareth, her Messiah and her Saviour. It remains to prove this.

The proof begins indeed with the initial promise to Abraham. "All the land, . . . to thee will I give it, and to thy seed *forever*" (Gen. 13:15). This promise practically was repeated to David, the kingdom of whose Son was to be established *forever* (2 Sam. 7:13). Certainly in the perspective there appeared no opportunity for a doubt in this matter, and no indication of even a break in the continuity of the possession of the land or the perpetuity of the kingdom.

A break came, however, as we have seen, first in the division of the kingdom in Rehoboam's reign, and later in the captivity both of Israel and Judah.

Nevertheless, the later prophets now take up the strain, and foretell that this break, serious as it is and prolonged as it may be, will make no difference



in the outcome. God's word shall be fulfilled, and His purpose of the redemption of the world through the descendants of Abraham shall not fail.

Take the first of these prophets in the order in which they appear in our canon. Isaiah, in his earliest message, speaks of the spiritual harlotry of Judah and Jerusalem and of the judgments that shall fall upon her, but they will be purifying judgments. Her judges shall be restored as at the first and her counsellors as at the beginning, and afterwards she shall be called "the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa. 1:25-27). Manifestly this has not yet taken place in the history of Jerusalem, and unless God's word shall fall to the ground, it is still to be looked for.

Jeremiah is very full and very plain in similar prophesying, and almost at random we select for our illustration chapter 33. Jehovah, by the prophet, is speaking of the Babylonian victory soon to be accomplished over Judah, and her captivity to follow. Of Jerusalem especially He says: "I have hid my face from this city." But then He adds, "I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will blend them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all iniquity. . . . And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth" (Jer. 33:5-9).

As further accentuating the futurity of these promises they are associated with the second coming of Christ. "In those days and at that time will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto

David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord, our Righteousness" (Jer. 33:15, 16).

Four times in the chapter does Jehovah refer to His covenant with David (see the third chapter), reaffirming it, and declaring that it will not be broken any more than His covenant of the day and of the night shall be broken.

Ezekiel's prophecy of the dry bones is so familiar that it is not necessary to quote it (chapter 37); but it may be sufficient to say that the resurrection it typifies is not a physical resurrection of individuals, but a political resurrection of the nation of Israel and Judah, to be then brought together again as one. Their moral resurrection is foretold in the preceding chapter, on which ground it is that the Lord is now able to say: "And David my servant shall be king over them and they shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; . . . and my servant David shall be their prince forever. . . . And I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. . . . Yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the Gentiles shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore" (Ezek. 37:24-28).

Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks is even

better known than Ezekiel's valley of dry bones. These seventy weeks, or seventy "sevens" of time, are determined upon Judah and Jerusalem "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9: 24). There is a general agreement among students of prophecy that a period of 490 years is here referred to, which is broken up into three parts. The first part ended with the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, and the second with the crucifixion of Christ and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The third part is yet to come, the last of the seventy sevens, during which these events of which Daniel speaks will be brought to pass, and which are similar in character to, and synchronize with, the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, already named.

We might pause here with our consideration of these four, which are called the major prophets; but Hosea, the first in order of the minor prophets, is a unique witness. As an object lesson, Jehovah called upon him to marry an unchaste woman, who deserted him even after she had borne him children. Nevertheless, he was commanded still to love and to provide for her, and to covenant while doing so, that she should not be the wife of any other man and that he would keep himself for her.

All this, we are told, is "according to the love of the Lord towards the children of Israel." "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and

without an image, and without ephod, and without teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3: 1-5).

## II

A question might arise at this point as to whether these prophecies, uttered prior to the Babylonian captivity of Judah, do not find fulfillment in their return therefrom.

One method of reply to this would be to point out, as might easily be done, that the nut does not fit the bolt. In other words, the prophecies were *not* fulfilled in that return. Jerusalem did not then become the righteous or faithful city. Judah and Israel were not cleansed from all iniquity then, nor did the nation then become a praise and honour before all the other nations of the earth, and much more to the same purport.

But another method of reply is to quote the prophets who prophesied *after* the Babylonian captivity, and whose utterances are in perfect harmony with those who went before.

Take a single one, Zechariah. In the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth chapters he is speaking of a time yet to come, when Jehovah "will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the peoples round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." In former times, when the sacred city had been besieged, the Gentile nations had been made "a cup of trembling" for her,

but now it will be reversed. In that day "I will seek to destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem."

When the Romans came against Jerusalem, A. D. 70, this was not so, but Jerusalem herself was destroyed. Is it not evident, therefore, that a future period is meant? In that day "they shall look unto me, whom they have pierced." "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives." "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth." Even a cursory reading of these chapters must convince any one willing to be convinced that the prophet is speaking of a time which is yet to come, when Judah and Israel shall be restored.

And the same is the testimony of the New Testament as well as the Old. Christ's words in Matthew 24:15-31 have not yet been fulfilled in the history of Judah and Jerusalem, and who shall dare to say that they shall not be? And what of Paul's remarkable testimony in Romans 11? "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved."

As a closing word it may be said that, unless Israel shall be restored again to her own land, the larger part of the book of Revelation, certainly chapters 7 to 20, would be almost entirely without meaning. Those chapters are very largely Jewish, and relate

to events that will take place in the history of that people, to a considerable extent in Palestine and the beloved city of Jerusalem.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What proof of the future restoration of Israel is there in Genesis 13:15 and 2 Samuel 7:13?
2. Quote Isaiah on this point.
3. How does Jeremiah associate the restoration with the second coming of Christ?
4. To what earlier promise of God does Jeremiah 33 refer?
5. What two kinds of "resurrection" in Israel's case are named by Ezekiel, and where?
6. What is to be the consummation of Daniel's "seventy weeks"?
7. In what chapter of Daniel is this referred to?
8. Distinguish in history, past and future, the three parts of these seventy weeks.
9. What makes the prophet Hosea a unique witness to the future restoration?
10. In what two ways would you reply to the question as to whether these prophecies were not fulfilled in Judah's return from Babylon?
11. Have you read Zechariah, chapters 12-14, or Matthew 24:15-31?
12. What verse of Romans 11 is quoted in this chapter?

## VI

# THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

## I

**T**HUS far in our studies, almost nothing has been said about the Church, and for the reason that we have been dealing chiefly with the Old Testament, in which the Church is not named. The Kingdom of God is there in evidence, the Church being reserved for the present age.

Paul refers to this interestingly in the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, at verses 25 and 26. He is speaking of his Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, and alludes to it as "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made . . . known to all nations for the obedience of faith." In other words, it was not revealed in the Old Testament; but for reasons already touched upon, and to be more particularly explained later on, it was kept until the occasion and the need for it appeared, after the rejection of Jesus Christ as the King of the promised Kingdom.

In his Epistle to the Colossians (1:23-27), the same apostle touches upon it from another angle. In the sufferings incident to his ministry he is filling up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ

for his body's sake, which is the Church." Of this Church he was made a minister according to a special "dispensation" or "stewardship" given him of God for the Gentiles, "to fully preach the Word of God." This fuller preaching meant the revelation of that "mystery which had been hid from all ages and generations, but now is made manifest to the saints." And if we ask what that mystery is, we find it to be the indwelling of Christ in His believing people.

Nor does this mean merely His indwelling in the believer as an individual, but, and because of that, His indwelling in the Church, considered as His mystical body, of which the individual believer is a member by faith.

Even more clearly does he express this in Ephesians 3:3-9. This "mystery" had been given to him, Paul, by revelation, which in other ages had not been made known unto the sons of men. And as to its essence, it was this: "That the Gentiles [with the believing Jews] should be fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel."

## II

A little reflection will lead us to see a kind of parallel here between Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New.

After the world may have been said to have rejected God, as instanced at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11), He then chose the nation of Israel (as yet in the loins of Abraham), to be His witness to the world and His instrument in the execution of His original



promise of redemption (Gen. 3:15). (See our second study on "God's Covenant with Abraham.") And so now, after the world has again rejected Him in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, He chose the Church, which is called the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23), to be His witness to the world and His instrument in this later age for the execution of that promise.

In other words, the Church did not come into being until after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Its birthday, indeed, was Pentecost (Acts 2). So says the distinguished church historian and theologian, Dr. Philip Schaff, in his admirable catechism, where he puts and answers the question:

"Who founded the Christian Church?

"Our exalted Saviour, on the fiftieth day after His resurrection, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon His disciples at Jerusalem. Refs.: Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20."

And to the same purport the Methodist standard theologian, Richard Watson, says, in commenting on Matthew 18:17: "The apostles who followed Christ may be considered as the elements of His Church at the time, but it could scarce be considered as constituted until after the day of Pentecost, when regular assemblies under apostolic direction were formed, the worship of God arranged, the Supper of the Lord administered, and the terms of communion mutually acknowledged. Christ therefore must be understood as speaking prospectively (*i. e.*, in Matt. 18:17)."

We like the way Dr. Schaff expresses it, because the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was absolutely essential to the forming of the Church into the body of Christ. For example, in Matthew 16:18 we find Christ saying, evidently with reference to the future, "I will build my Church," while subsequent Scriptures show that He proposed to build it not from the outside but from the inside. As carrying out this thought, note that on the night in which He was betrayed He said to His disciples that the Holy Spirit who then dwelt *with* them would be *in* them (John 14:17). Again, after His resurrection He commanded them to remain in Jerusalem until they should be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5).

Is it not reasonable to suppose that the event at Pentecost, ten days after His ascension, was the fulfillment of both of these promises in one (Acts 2:1-4)? As they were then *filled* with the Holy Spirit, had He not come to dwell *in* them, and was not this equivalent to baptizing them?

Take Paul's testimony as to this, in 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13. There he speaks of believers as being one body with Christ, and affirms that we were baptized into this body by one Spirit.

It was like this: The believers were all assembled with one accord in one place, ready to be made an organism, ready to be incorporated into Christ. He, the Head of the proposed organism, was on high, but He now sends down His Spirit to dwell in every one of them. His Spirit is one, and since He dwells alike in every believer, He necessarily unites them to the Head, and in doing so unites them one to another in

the Head. Thus the body is formed, for "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17).

Now, this body of Christ has a particular, and, in a sense, a *limited*, work to do on the earth. Several of the Pauline Scriptures refer to it, but just now we choose Ephesians 4:1-16.

Passing over the opening verses, which instruct us how to keep this unity of the Spirit which Christ has made for us, we come to verse 7, where the gifts are spoken of which the Head of the body bestows upon the members. These are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (verse 11).

And for what purpose were these gifts bestowed? "For the perfecting of the saints," is the answer (verse 12). And why are the saints perfected? "Unto the work of ministering for the building up of the Body of Christ" (R. V.).

This last is deeply interesting. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, considered as gifts to the Church, are not in themselves an end, but only a means to an end. Their purpose is to equip the whole company of believers to engage in the work of Christian ministering, each according to his or her capacity. And the object of this general ministry on the part of all is "the building up of the Body of Christ" the increase of its membership, the completion of it as an organism, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (verse 13).

The "perfect man" in this case does not mean the

individual man, but the corporate man rather. It means that MAN we conceive of when we think of Christ as the Head and the Church as His body. When that MAN is perfected, that mystical organism complete, in other words, when God has called out from among the nations all whom He intends in order to form the Church, then Christ shall have attained, and we in Christ shall have attained, the measure of the stature of His fullness.

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### **QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON**

1. Why has not the Church been mentioned hitherto?
2. How does Paul speak of the Church in Old Testament times?
3. How does he define the "mystery" in his epistle to the Colossians?
4. How is the definition enlarged upon in Ephesians?
5. When did the Church begin its history?
6. Have you carefully examined Matthew 16:18; John 14:17; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13?
7. State in your own words the teaching concerning the Church as the Body of Christ which those Scriptures set forth.
8. What is peculiar about the work of the Church?
9. Who is the source of Christian ministry?
10. What are such Christian ministers called?
11. What is meant by the "perfect man" in this case?
12. Have you carefully examined Ephesians 4:1-16?

## VII

# HOW THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH DIFFER

## I

**I**N chapter three we considered "God's Covenant with David, or The Coming Kingdom," in which it was stated that God is not now and in this age setting up His Kingdom, but doing something else, namely, building up His Church, which is called the Body of Christ. The time will come, it was added, when this Body will be completed and the Church caught up to "meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:16-18). Afterwards, Christ will return to the earth and in Him God will set up His Kingdom which is the Kingdom promised to David and now in abeyance.

The last chapter bore the title, "The Place of the Church in the Plan of Redemption," where it was shown that the Church did not come into being until after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, *i. e.*, on the day of Pentecost. It was also shown that the Church has a particular and a limited work to do on the earth, *i. e.*, the building up of itself until, as a spiritual organism, it is complete or perfected, when the translation above referred to takes place.

In this chapter, however, the Kingdom and the Church are brought together in one view, in such a way that it may be seen more clearly how they differ.

## II

To speak first of the Kingdom. The word is a translation of the Greek "basileia," and is never translated any other way. There are two phrases descriptive of it in the New Testament, "the Kingdom of God" and "the Kingdom of Heaven," which in the popular mind are identical and interchangeable, but this is an error. The first is the broader and more comprehensive term, universal in fact, "including all moral intelligences who are willingly subject to God." These are the good angels, the saints of all past and future dispensations, and the true Church of the present dispensation. (See Luke 13:28, 29; Heb. 12:22, 23.)

On the other hand, the Kingdom of Heaven, as distinguished from the Kingdom of God, is a limited designation, and takes its rise in the divine promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:10-17. The story is something like this: At the creation of man God gave into his hands the dominion over all the earth, which man lost to Satan at the fall, the latter then becoming the "prince of this world" (cf. Gen. 1:26-28 with Matt. 4:8-10, and John 14:30). Immediately, however, God revealed His remedial purpose in Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). This purpose was to restore the dominion to man, and through man, again to bring it back to Himself.

Two thousand years later this purpose further revealed itself in the divine call of Abraham to become the father of the nation of Israel (Gen. 12:1-7). This nation was to be instrumental in the execution and fulfillment of the original purpose.

Again, one thousand years after the call of Abraham, and when the nation which had come out of his loins was established in its land, and David his descendant was reigning over it, that purpose still further revealed itself in the promise to David that the Lord would set up his seed after him and establish his kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:10-17). This is the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is called "the Kingdom of Heaven," not because it is to be realized or manifested in heaven, but because the thought of it originated there, in God's purpose of love and grace towards His creatures, and because it is heavenly in its principles and in its authority. In other words, to quote Daniel 2:44, it is "the Kingdom of Heaven" because "the God of heaven" shall set it up, but it will be set up on earth, nevertheless, and will have Jerusalem as its capital (Isa. 24:23; Joel 3:16, 17). At first it will be established over Israel when she shall have been regathered to Palestine and converted to Jesus Christ as her Saviour and Messiah; but ultimately it will be established over the whole earth (Ps. 2:8; Isa. 2:1-4; Ezek. 37:21-25; Zech. 9:10).

Furthermore, the thought that God is to set up the Kingdom of Heaven should be dissociated in our minds from any idea that man will set it up. That is, it will not be brought to pass by any legislation of

men, nor by any international treaties. Neither will it come by "persuasion," through the preaching of the Gospel and the progress of Christianity for example, but rather by the exercise of divine power and through purifying judgments on the world powers in connection with the second advent of Christ. (See Ps. 2; Isa. 9: 7; Dan. 2: 35, 44, 45; Zech. 14: 1-9; Rev. 19: 11-16.)

As the Scofield Bible says, "it is impossible to conceive to what heights of spiritual, intellectual and physical perfection humanity will attain in the coming Kingdom," but we know it will mark an age of peace and righteousness. The meek will inherit the earth in those days; longevity will be increased; beast ferocity will be removed; justice and equity will be the rule; and the great majority of earth's inhabitants will be saved by the grace of God, for the knowledge of Him will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Especially should it be noted that Satan will then be removed from the scene and from active participation in human affairs (Rev. 20: 1-5).

And finally, as showing more clearly the relation of the Kingdom of Heaven to the Kingdom of God, let it be repeated that the Kingdom of Heaven has for its great object the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of God in the earth. That is to say, the "Kingdom of Heaven merges into the Kingdom of God," when Christ, having "put all enemies (of the Kingdom of Heaven) under his feet," "shall have delivered up the Kingdom (of Heaven) to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. 15: 24-28).



## III

Coming to the thought of the Church, it is the translation of the Greek word "ecclesia," which means the called-out ones, as when a number of people are called out from their private concerns to a public meeting, and assembly of some kind.

In the New Testament it is used (1) to designate a local church, as when Paul speaks of "the church which is at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1); (2) a group of churches, as when he speaks of "all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16:4); (3) the visible body of professed believers, "all the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16); and especially (4) the body of the truly redeemed in this dispensation, no matter of what locality, or to what class they belong, "the Lord added to the Church daily" (Acts 2:47), "the Church which is his body" (Eph. 1:22, 23), "the Church of the first-born" (Heb. 12:23).

These are the called-out ones in the sense that God, by His Holy Spirit, has called them out of the world unto Himself through the exercise of their faith in Christ. They have been "delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son" (Col. 1:13).

Thus we see that the Church is not revealed in the plan of God till we reach the New Testament. Then it is that Christ appears on the earth, He who is the Seed of the woman promised in Eden, the Seed of Abraham and the Seed of David, the Son who should proceed out of Him and in whom His Kingdom (*i. e.*, the Kingdom of Heaven) should be established forever (2 Sam. 7:12, 13).

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3: 1, 2). And Christ Himself at the initiation of His ministry in Galilee did the same (4: 17).

But Israel did not repent, but instead she kept on in her wicked way and rejected "him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." When this rejection became evident and fixed at the time of Peter's noble confession of Him as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," then it was that Christ announced the new program about the Church which had been "kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16: 25). He said "upon this rock," i. e., upon this confession of me, "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16: 18).

This building process began on the day of Pentecost, and has been in process ever since, and will continue until the building is completed, when "the Church which is his body" (Eph. 1: 22, 23), will be caught up to meet its Head in the air (1 Thess. 4: 16-18). (See the previous chapter, "The Place of the Church in the Plan of Redemption.")

It thus appears that the Church at present bears something of the same relationship to the Kingdom of Heaven that the latter bears to the Kingdom of God; in other words, it has for one of its objects at least, the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth (Eph. 5: 29-32; 2 Tim. 2: 12).

## IV

A few confirmatory evidences of the distinction between the Kingdom and the Church may be appreciated. For example, consider (1) the terms used in representing each. The Church is "built," the Kingdom is "set up." The first word is never used in connection with the Kingdom nor the second in connection with the Church.

Consider (2) the relationship sustained by men and women towards each. The Church has its "elders," its "messengers," its "servants," but the Kingdom has its "heirs." We "see," we "receive," we "enter," we "inherit the Kingdom," but these terms are never used in Scripture of our relationship to the Church.

Consider (3) the way in which reference is made to each. The "advancement" and "extension" of the Kingdom are spoken of, but the "cleansing" and "edifying" of the Church.

(4) The Kingdom is a unit, the Church an aggregation. The word "Kingdom" is never found in the plural, but "Church" is very commonly referred to thus.

(5) The Church will reign with Christ, but the Kingdom will be reigned over by Christ and His Church.

(6) The Church is an election, taken out of all nations; the Kingdom will be universal.

(7) The Church is now in the world and longs for the time when it will be delivered out of it, but the Kingdom is still in abeyance and prayed for

in the familiar words, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

(8) The Church is temporal so far as its establishment on the earth is concerned, but the Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

Years ago there lived and ministered in Boston an earnest though somewhat eccentric individual known as Father Taylor, pastor of the Seamen's Bethel. He was a godly man but not very cultivated, and one day, while preaching, he became considerably tangled in his utterance and broke out with the words, "Brethren, I seem to have lost the track of my nominative case; but one thing I know, I'm bound for the Kingdom!"

He was right. Though he had been in the Church a great many years, he realized that the Kingdom was still future. Father Taylor, in other words, was not guilty of the blunder of a university president (also a minister) whom we have seen quoted as follows: "The Christian Church is the Kingdom of God on earth, viewed in its objective or institutional form. God's Kingdom among men is as old as human history!"

## V

There are two or three textual objections to the foregoing that may suggest themselves. For example, what about Christ's words, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and "The Kingdom of God is within you" (John 18:36; Luke 17:21)? And the words of Paul, "For the Kingdom of God is not meat

and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

Some have found embarrassment in reconciling the first with the idea that the Kingdom is to be an earthly one; but there is no more conflict there than in the case of the Church. Christ's Church is not of this world, but it is in the world.

It is the same with the second text, which the margin renders, "The Kingdom of God is among you, or in the midst of you." The Kingdom could not in any sense have been within the persons to whom Christ addressed these words, because they were the wicked and contentious Pharisees who were expecting the Kingdom to come by such methods of observation as they could appreciate. Christ's words rebuked them. The Kingdom was already in the midst of them, or among them, in the sense that the King was there, if only they had eyes to see Him.

And as to Paul's words, of course, righteousness, peace and joy are already in the earth, but this does not constitute the Kingdom to be set up after the coming judgment on the nations, and which is to constitute the throne of David.

Hence we see that the true attitude of the Church to-day must be that of the best days of her history, one of loyal and loving expectancy, as she continues to pray: "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

**QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON**

1. Give a condensed review of the earlier lesson on "God's Covenant with David."
2. Do the same for the lesson on "The Place of the Church."
3. What two Biblical phrases describe the "Kingdom"?
4. How do these two expressions differ in meaning?
5. Where may it be said that the conception of the Kingdom of Heaven takes its rise?
6. Tell in your own words the story leading up to it.
7. Why is it called "the Kingdom 'of Heaven' "?
8. What will be its earthly beginning and ultimate extent?
9. By what means will the Kingdom be set up on the earth?
10. How does the Scofield Bible summarize the earthly blessings of the Kingdom?
11. State the relation of "the Kingdom of Heaven" to "the Kingdom of God."
12. Can you quote 1 Corinthians 15:24-28?
13. What does "ecclesia" mean, and in what four ways is it used in the New Testament?
14. When, and under what circumstances was the Church revealed?
15. When will its earthly history conclude?
16. Name eight evidences confirmatory of the distinction between the Kingdom and the Church.
17. Name and reply to certain textual objections to the foregoing.

## VIII

### THE ANTICHRIST, HIS HISTORY AND HIS DOOM

#### I

**I**N dealing with a subject of this kind, time spent in review is not always misspent. Therefore let us sweep the horizon once more, the better to relate the present mountain peak of prophecy to the rest of the range. We have seen:

(1) That God has a purpose of redemption for the race revealed in the promise of Eden that the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

(2) At a certain point in time, He called out the nation of Israel as an instrument in the execution of this promise.

(3) The failure of Israel to fulfill her mission has caused her to be set aside temporarily while the "times of the Gentiles" are in process.

(4) These times are to come to an end in catastrophic judgment by and by, at which time Israel will have been regathered to her own land and restored to fellowship with God in order to the renewal of her commission as His witness to the world. The millennial blessing follows.

(5) But now, while Israel is rejected and the "times of the Gentiles" are in their course, God is

doing a new thing in the earth. He is calling out a people for His Name from all the nations. This people are being formed into the body of Christ, which, when its number is completed, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and to reign with Him over the millennial earth.

To return now to those catastrophic judgments. *When* will they fall upon the earth? What will be their character? And where, and in whom, will they be focused? To this last inquiry we address ourselves in this study.

The prophet Daniel is our authority for saying that the Gentile nations, which in earlier times were federated under Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander and the Cæsars, shall again be federated under a secular despot mightier and wickedder than they. He is described by him in chapters 6 and 8 as a "little horn," in chapter 9:26 as a "prince" of the Roman people, and in chapter 11:36 as "the king."

The details of the description indicate his intellectuality and boldness: "eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things." These "great things" are "words against the Most High," and he "shall wear out the saints of the Most High," and "think to change times and laws." "His power shall be mighty," and "he shall destroy wonderfully," and "through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand."

His time will be "the time of the end," i. e., as we learn from other Scriptures, the last seven years of the present age, during which time he will "make a firm covenant" with the Jews then residing in



Jerusalem. This covenant he will break in the middle of that period and "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"; he will deny the Jews liberty to worship God, and will set up his own image to be worshipped on a pinnacle of the restored temple. "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

In other Old Testament Scriptures he is spoken of as "the king of Babylon," prouder even than Nebuchadnezzar—"I will be like the Most High"—but he "shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isa. 14; Micah 5:6). In Zechariah 11:15-17, he is spoken of as a shepherd, but a foolish and a worthless one, who "shall eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hoofs in pieces."

## II

The New Testament takes up the story of his career in the Gospels. It is a common opinion of expositors that our Lord refers to him in John 5:43, where, rebuking His fellow countrymen for their unbelief and rejection of Himself, He says: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." It is thus not improbable that this coming one may be a Jew, but in any event he will be accepted by restored Israel as their predicted Messiah. It is this fact which in a later writing of the New Testament gives him the title of "the Antichrist."

It is in the Olivet discourse of Matthew 24, however, that our Lord refers to him more particularly. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of

desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place" (verse 15). This "abomination of desolation" is none other than the wicked "prince" of Daniel 9:27, and the same "little horn," who shall have his image placed on a pinnacle of the temple where all may behold it, and who himself on some occasion, or occasions, will be found sitting in the temple giving out that he himself is God (2 Thess. 2:4).

This allusion to Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians brings us to the next New Testament reference. In his first epistle to that church he had expatiated on the coming of Christ for His Church; but at this time a grievous persecution seems to have been raging in the city, and some of the Christians had come to believe that "the day of the Lord" had come. In other words, they thought they were already in the tribulation period, which a better intelligence doubtless would have led them to see could not be true while the Church was still on the earth. Moreover, they had been misled by a forged letter, as from Paul, that contributed to their error.

The apostle is now seeking to correct this, and he tells them that that day shall not come until after the apostasy and "the man of sin (or lawlessness) be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above (or against) all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

A further description follows in the same chapter, in which it is said that his "coming is after the

working of Satan with all power, and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." He will come to an end, however, for "the Lord shall consume him with the breath of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming."

This may be as good a place as any to say that the common application of these words to the Pope does not fit. When he is carried into St. Peter's, he may be seated somewhat higher than what is called the "tabernacle of the host"; but still, St. Peter's is not the "temple of God." That temple was erected in Jerusalem by Solomon, according to the instruction of his father David, who said: "All this the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (1 Chron. 28:19). And there it is to be reërected, according to the prophets; and there the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet" is yet to be seen.

It is the Apostle John who specifically calls this person the Antichrist. "Who is the liar," he exclaims, "but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22). Another evidence this is that the Pope is not he, for the Pope does not deny that Jesus is the Christ. On the contrary, he calls himself the "vicar of Christ," and in a way professes to exalt Him. He does not deny the virgin birth of Christ, but makes much of it rather, in the form of Mariolatry. Neither does he deny His atoning sacrifice, nor His resurrection, nor His coming

again, though the Church he represents weakens these great facts and almost nullifies the doctrines they sustain by her traditions.

Indeed, Protestantism contains as many of the deadly elements of Antichristianism to-day as Roman Catholicism. It is time our eyes were opened to this fact. The destructive criticism of the Bible which began in Germany less than one hundred years ago, and which holds sway in so many of our Protestant theological seminaries at this time, and is voiced in so many of our Protestant pulpits and our religious periodicals, is doing as much as, if not more than, the Papacy to prepare the way for the coming of him whom humanity, in its blindness, will worship as the "Very God."

### III

We now come to the book of Revelation. More is said about this being here than in any other part of the Bible. And the reason is that Revelation deals very particularly with the events upon the earth during the last seven years of this age, when the Antichrist will be revealed and have come into his great power.

By many he is thought to be the rider of the white horse of Revelation 6:2, who goes forth "conquering and to conquer." He it is in Revelation 11:2, who is treading the holy city (Jerusalem) "under foot forty and two months," the latter half of the period of seven years. He it is who, "ascending out of the bottomless pit, shall make war" against God's

two witnesses in that holy city "and shall overcome and kill them."

He is the "beast" which John saw as revealed in chapter 13, "coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." "And the dragon [*i. e.*, Satan] gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority." "And all the world wondered after the beast," saying, "Who is able to make war with him?" "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God." "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

The fact that this beast comes "up out of the sea" identifies him with the vision of Daniel where he saw the four beasts come up out of the sea. The "sea" is commonly typical of the Gentile nations, and the particular sea in mind just now is doubtless the Mediterranean, the center, so to speak, of the former Roman Empire, and hence the center of what is called the prophetic earth.

The "ten horns" are a further mark of identification, showing that the Roman Empire is referred to, not as it has been known during its entire existence, but as it shall be known in its last form.

The "seven heads" are a new feature not referred to in any earlier prophecy of the beast, but symbolizing, it is thought, the different forms of government in which the Roman Empire has existed, from the absolute monarchy of Nebuchadnezzar's period to the constitutional monarchy and democracy of our

own time. One of the heads was "as it were wounded to death," the prophet says, and "his deadly wound was healed."

In other words, here is the renewal, as by Satanic power, of a certain form of government under which the Roman Empire once existed, but which had passed away. It is this renewal that causes all the world to wonder, and to say, "Who is able to make war with him?"

But this chapter also contains a revelation of another beast "coming up out of the earth." "He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." "And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast before him [or in his sight], and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast." "And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do." And he caused "that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." And "no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." "And his number is 666."

This second beast comes up out of the "earth" rather than the "sea." If the sea symbolizes the Gentile nations, the earth possibly symbolizes Israel, so that this "false prophet," as he is called later on, may be a Jew, while the beast before whom he exercises his power may be a Gentile. The first "beast" is the supreme civil or political power at the end of the age, but the second "beast" is the ecclesiastical power or what will stand for it at that time. His "two

horns like a lamb" seem to set him off in contrast to Christ, but since "he spake as a dragon," it is evident that he is energized by Satan. Note the trinity of evil: The dragon, the beast, the false prophet! What a caricature of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

Nor let it be forgotten that all this is in the name of religion. At the beginning of Gentile dominion, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, sought to ordain a public worship for all his subjects, by setting up his image to be worshipped, and here history repeats itself. "Nothing promotes discord among nations as diversity of religion." Hence, when the Roman Empire is once more federated politically, that federation will be sealed by what another aptly calls "a new common-sense, matter-of-fact sort of worship, obligatory upon every one," and focused on the image of the beast, the great emperor himself.

This is the abomination of desolation which will be set up in the Jewish temple, while perhaps facsimiles will be found in all the cathedrals and churches of Christendom in that day.

And the second beast "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast." He deceives them by the miracles he does. Not pretended miracles, be it remembered, but real miracles. This is the time predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2, when God shall send upon men strong delusion for their sin, that they should believe a lie; for while the miracles are real, the worship they sustain is false.

And no insubordination will be tolerated. All must receive a mark, either on the hand or on the

forehead. No man can buy or sell without it. This mark will be the name of the beast or the number of his name. That is, it may be expressed in letters, or in cabalistic numbers. In the Greek and Hebrew languages letters are used to express numbers as well as sounds.

“Putting aside vain guesses and efforts of ingenious men, the general idea of what this means is plain enough. Seven is God’s number in His present dealings with the world, while six is the utmost reach of man.”

This number is first mentioned in connection with man, *i. e.*, in his creation on the sixth day, and, as Bullinger says, it thus becomes his “hall-mark,” stamping everything with which it is used as belonging to him. God’s great human opponents have been so marked. Goliath was six cubits in height, his spear’s head weighed six shekels, and he had six pieces of armour. Nebuchadnezzar’s image was sixty cubits high and six broad, and six instruments of worship summoned its worshippers.

But the great significance of this number, as Bullinger says further, is its symbolical use in the ancient pagan mysteries. And SSS, or 666, is still “the secret connecting link between them and their revival in spiritism and theosophy, which aim at the union of all religions in one.”

“Here is wisdom,” as the inspired prophet says. “He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast.” It were as though he went on to add: Let not the faithful remnant be afraid; great and awful as his power is, he is not God, though he



shows himself to be so. After all, his number is but "the number of a man."

#### IV

It is when we come to Revelation, chapters 17 and 19, that we perceive the doom of the "beast" and the "false prophet," together with the events immediately leading up to it.

The former is depicted as "scarlet coloured," and he has a woman seated upon him. This "woman" is subsequently interpreted to symbolize "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," and "over peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

The city is then identified by the name written on the woman's forehead as "Babylon the Great," meaning, as many believe, the same old Babylon (see chapter 10) on the plain of Shinar, revived at the end of this age as the localized seat of power, or throne, of the Antichrist. As she is sitting on the beast, it means that the Antichrist is supporting her in all that she holds of blasphemy and idolatry and intoxication "with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

The record goes on to show the transfer of the power and strength of the ten kings unto the "beast," "for God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

From one point of view, this is Satan's work; and yet God ruleth over all, and He "shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie"

(2 Thess. 2:11), and so surrender themselves to the Antichrist. These then make war with the Lamb, but are overcome. It is the battle of Armageddon that is here referred to, in which the beast is taken, and with him the false prophet, and "these both were cast alive into the lake of fire" (Rev. 19:20).

The rest of the army which they led were ordinary men, and their dead bodies were eaten by the fowls of the air, for there was none to bury them. But these two, while also men, were nevertheless superhuman men. They came up out of the abyss and cannot now be slain as mortals (Bullinger); hence they are cast alive into the "lake of fire." And there are they still found alive at the close of the millennium (Rev. 20:10).

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Review the lessons thus far.
2. To what inquiry are we addressing ourselves in this lesson?
3. What Old Testament prophet is our first guide?
4. For what future event is he authority?
5. Have you read the chapters in Daniel to which the lesson refers?
6. Describe the wicked person therein predicted.
7. Identify his period and his "covenant."
8. What other Old Testament prophets allude to him, and in what way?
9. How does our Lord refer to him as recorded by John?

10. What title of him does this warrant?
11. What is he called in Matthew 24, and why?
12. Read carefully, and expound 2 Thessalonians 2.
13. Why do not these words fit the history of the Roman pontiff?
14. What is there in Protestantism to be feared, and why?
15. With what does the book of Revelation chiefly deal?
16. Trace this wicked person through the chapters of that book.
17. How does Revelation thus become identified with the book of Daniel in the history of this person?
18. Read carefully and expound Revelation 13:1-10.
19. Describe the second "beast" revealed in this chapter.
20. How are the two differentiated?
21. What is the office of the second beast and how will it be accomplished?
22. What, according to Bullinger, is the significance of 666?
23. What warning does this bring us against the demand for a "universal" religion?
24. What chapters in Revelation reveal the doom of the "beast" and the "false prophet"?
25. What city does the "scarlet-coloured woman" symbolize?
26. What wicked prominence is reserved for that city?
27. What explains the action of the kings of the federated Roman Empire in giving over their power to the "beast"?
28. In what great battle will they be overcome?
29. What is the doom of the "beast" and the "false prophet"?

## IX

### WHY THE POPE IS NOT THE ANTICHRIST

#### I

**A**S the articles forming the chapters of this book appeared from time to time in the *Christian Herald* (see prefatory note), they naturally gave rise to questions, some of which were sent by the editors to the author for reply in their columns.

A few of them were not questions so much as expressions of dissent from some of the views presented. For example: that the Jewish nation would be rehabilitated in Palestine proved a surprise to some, and even intelligent and educated people were found capable of so reading the Bible on that subject as to make it teach the very opposite to the truth.

Another theme whose treatment brought unhappiness to some was that of the apostasy and the Antichrist. That Babylon means the papacy and that the man of sin is the Pope, is one of the beliefs of the Reformation period that is still held by not a few with more tenacity even than the doctrine of justification by faith itself.

There was good reason for the Reformers feeling keenly on that subject, and good excuse for their

misunderstanding the Scriptures concerning it; but history, to say nothing of Sacred Writ, has proved them to be wrong.

We know how erroneous is the teaching of Roman Catholicism and how soul-destroying it is. And we know also that the character and conduct of its hierarchy in many places closely resembles what the Bible teaches about Antichristianity and the Antichrist. But to closely resemble a thing is not the same as being the thing itself.

In the fulfillment of prophecy a part of the evidence is not enough. To reach a conclusion on that basis breeds all sorts of confusion. The prophecy must be fulfilled completely, if God's Word shall be honoured and our faith sustained. We do not hesitate to say that Roman Catholicism is a daughter of Babylon whose features resemble her mother's very closely, but still the daughter and the mother are not identical.

## II

An exception is made here in order to discuss one of the letters received on this subject.

The correspondent refers to the Pope's assumption to be the "vicar of Christ," and says, "his assertion is Antichrist." Of course the correspondent does not mean just that, because it would negative his contention. The Antichrist, whoever he may be, is a person and not an "assertion" merely. But what the correspondent means is that such an assertion on the Pope's part is anti-Christian, with which we fully agree. Indeed, the whole system of Roman

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Catholicism is anti-Christian, and as such it is one of the contributing elements, and a strong one, in creating a political and religious situation favourable to the rise of the Antichrist; but this is different from saying that the Pope himself is that person.

At another place in his letter the correspondent quotes Paul as saying that "this whole popery is an untruth, a lie, hence is Antichrist." But he does not mean just that either, for Paul never mentions popery. The correspondent discloses what he means when he says that "the Pope fulfills Paul's description in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12." But here he is mistaken. The Pope's blasphemy and arrogance have been very great, but he has not yet opposed and exalted "himself about all that is called God, or that is worshipped." His very title "vicar of Christ," disproves that. Nor does he, as God, sit "in the temple of God showing himself that he is God." The Vatican or St. Peter's at Rome is not the temple of God and is not called by that name. Roman Catholicism does not attach the word "temple" to its church buildings.

The temple Paul has in mind is the historic one in Jerusalem, which is to be rebuilt by the Jews in the latter end of this age. Our correspondent does not believe this, and affirms that "we have no Scriptural evidence that the temple ever will be rebuilt"; but in this he again errs, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

He errs at still another point, when he takes exception to the remark in our article that the Antichrist has yet to appear. He quotes Paul's saying that

“the mystery of iniquity” was already at work, as a proof that the Antichrist existed over 1,800 years ago. But “the mystery of iniquity” and the Antichrist are not one and the same; the Antichrist develops out of the mystery of iniquity, and the apostle himself testifies that the former had not been revealed in his day, but was yet to come (verse 8).

### III

But why take such pains with this matter? Is it merely to refute an opponent? By no means. Time is too short and space is too valuable for that. It is to make clear the teaching of Scripture on a very serious matter, and one that grows more and more serious as we “see the day approaching.”

We may be mistaken indeed, but it looks to us like a case of spiritual camouflage. That French word has sprung into the limelight during the progress of this war, and we have come to learn that it means some kind of humbug for the deception of the enemy.

In some such way as this, Satan is now acting with reference to the great move he is soon to make. That move comes when he is cast out of heaven and down to this earth (Rev. 12: 9-13), and when he will give “his power, and his seat, and great authority” to the beast (Rev. 13: 2). In the meantime he would divert our thought from the real beast by occupying it with a humbug. He would keep us from watching out against the greater enemy to come, by concentrating our attention upon the lesser enemy that now is.

## IV

To speak plainly, the Papacy is an enemy of truth, and the Pope himself is no dim foreshadowing of the Antichrist, but that monster, when he arrives, will find his way prepared for him through Protestant Berlin as well as Catholic Rome. To quote Nietzsche, the German philosopher, whose teaching is so largely responsible for this war: "While preparing to found a world-empire, Germany is also preparing to create a world-religion."

If such a purpose or preparation were limited to Germany, we might not seriously fear; but the philosophical and religious teaching which underlies it is rife throughout Christendom. Our colleges and universities are permeated with it, and our pulpits in some cases are its mouthpiece.

By such teaching is meant that which ignores, or questions, or outrightly opposes the Bible as the revealed will of the only true God, the incarnation and deity of Jesus Christ, His impeccable humanity and the infinite value of His atoning sacrifice for the salvation of all men.

This is what is true in Protestantism to-day, and has been true for a long while; and it is laying the ground and preparing the way for the real Antichrist, who is yet to come, and whose description and history elicited the above remarks.

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QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What is the opinion of some as to the papacy and the Pope?



2. When did it take its rise?
3. How is the teaching of Roman Catholicism characterized?
4. What relation may Roman Catholicism be said to bear to Babylon?
5. What relation does Roman Catholicism bear to the Antichrist?
6. How does the Pope fall short of fulfilling 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-12?
7. What temple has Paul in mind in that Scripture?
8. What is the relation of the Antichrist to the "mystery of iniquity"?
9. What word of current warfare illustrates Satan's method in the world at present?
10. What event is scheduled in his history before very long?
11. How is he seeking to humbug us about it?
12. How will the Antichrist have his way prepared for him?
13. According to Nietzsche, what is Germany seeking to do?
14. What do we mean by this false "philosophy and religious teaching"?

## X

### BABYLON: HER COMING RESTORATION AND HER FALL

#### I

**T**HE great British advance in Mesopotamia, involving the capture of Bagdad, interested students of prophecy even more than what was transpiring on the western front of the seat of war. The proclamation of General Sir Stanley Maude to the inhabitants of that city read like an address of a victorious king of Israel or Judah to the same peoples in an earlier day.

Speaking of the trade prospect now opened before Mesopotamia, and for that matter before the whole world, a member of the British House of Commons said: "It will mean eventually putting down something like a new Hamburg in the world. There are rich oil-fields near by, and the 'black country' of Mesopotamia may rise here, and the demands on European manufacturers for machinery and other things become enormous."

We gather from other sources that railway construction across the Syrian desert will be so easy that probably Damascus will be connected with the Euphrates, and motor cars become as common there as on the Lincoln Highway across the United States.

However, we speak of Bagdad and its awakening only as an approach to the consideration of the awakening of its near neighbour on the southwest, the ancient and famous Babylon, whose history occupies so large a place in the inspired Word. It begins at the tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis in the record of the first world-monarchy under Nimrod.

There, at Babel, or Babylon, was the scene of the earliest apostasy from God after the Flood; and, always the enemy of His people, she became in later days the metropolis of the great Gentile empire under Nebuchadnezzar. But as "God promised to remember his covenant with Israel, so he promised also to remember Babylon in the day of his wrath," and the purpose of this chapter is to show how that promise is to be fulfilled.

## II

Returning to Genesis, we find that hundreds of years after the Flood the sons of Noah, *i. e.*, Shem, Ham and Japheth, had greatly multiplied themselves and migrated to the ends of the earth. The Japhethites peopled Europe mostly, and are known to history as the Aryan race, which includes the Hindus, Celts, Greeks, Italians, Germans and Slavs. The Hamites went into northern Arabia, Egypt and Ethiopia or modern Abyssinia, while the Semites remained nearer the starting-point, giving origin to the Arabians, Assyrians and Hebrews, from whom came Israel, and finally our Saviour and Lord.

There is one individual among the Hamites, how-

ever, of whom we have particular record as the first world-monarch: Nimrod, the father in that sense of all the Nebuchadnezzars, Alexanders, Cæsars and ambitious Kaisers down to the forthcoming Antichrist. He was "a mighty one in the earth," or, as the Targum of Jonathan describes him, "a mighty rebel before the Lord." "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel," the record says. *His* kingdom it was, indeed, and not the Lord's.

"And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. . . . And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

There were two reasons for this action, the obvious and the occult. In the first place, the solidarity of the race was in mind, the application of the popular idea that "in union there is strength"; but back of this was a false worship, so false and so bad that it is ever after pointed to in Scripture as the earthly fountain-head and source of all idolatry and rejection of the true God.

"And God came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded," and He confounded their "one language" which had been put to so bad a use, and He scattered them to the four corners of the earth.

But now once more in the end of the age the world is moving towards unification, and so far as it also is without the knowledge of the true God, it only can be doomed to failure, as was the first attempt in the same direction. God will again come down and in-

terfere with things, and judge the nations that glory in their own achievements but do not glory in Him.

### III

But not to anticipate. Hundreds of years after Nimrod, Babylon for a second time occupies the field of history, and Nebuchadnezzar, like his great predecessor, is obsessed by the dream of world dominion. And God permits him to try it out. Indeed, He uses this king's ambition to punish other and smaller nations in their disobedience, which become his vassals. The story is told in 2 Kings, and in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel.

And of course Nebuchadnezzar is inflated by his power, and sets up his image to be worshipped, and renews the tower of Babel on the old foundations, and exclaims: "Is not this great Babylon, that *I* have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of *my* power and for the glory of *my* majesty?"

But "while the word was yet in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king, Nebuchadnezzar, to thee is it spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee" (Dan. 4:30, 31).

The city also comes in for visitation as well as its royal builder, and the prophet Isaiah testifies:

"Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

"But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; . . .

"And her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged" (13:19-22).

There are those who think this prophecy was fulfilled in the overthrow of the Babylonian power by the Medes and Persians, but I believe they are mistaken. This whole chapter of Isaiah and the next seem to be a single prophecy, and when so regarded there are at least eight features which were not fulfilled in that overthrow, and hence are yet to be fulfilled. Benjamin Wills Newton, in his book, too little known, "Babylon and the East," enumerates them thus:

"(1) The whole land was not then destroyed (chapter 13:5).

"(2) The Day of the Lord did not then come (verse 6).

"(3) The physical phenomena were not then seen (verse 10).

"(4) The city was not then destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah (verses 19-22). Indeed, the victory of Cyrus was almost bloodless, and the scepter passed comparatively quietly into his hands. Moreover, the land still yields an income to its Turkish rulers, and a city and village exist on its site.

"(5) The Lord did not then visit Jacob with rest, nor has He yet done so (chapter 14:1-3).

"(6) The king of Babylon so minutely described (verses 4-22), has not yet arisen, which seems to point to a greater and more august being than the world has yet seen.

"(7) The Assyrian was not then trodden

down in the land of Judah, nor was the yoke then removed from Judah's neck (verse 25).

“(8) The divine purpose on the whole earth was not then consummated (verse 26).”

In other words, the blow which then fell on Babylon was premonitory only, a fact perfectly consistent with the divine method in other cases. “Indeed,” to quote Mr. Newton further, “so strongly do present facts as well as events known from Scripture as about to occur in the land of Israel indicate Babylon's restoration, that if the Bible were silent respecting it, we should conclude nevertheless that its revival was not only probable, but well-nigh certain.”

#### IV

But the Bible is not silent. There is a general consent among students of the prophetic word that Zechariah, who prophesied long after Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians, foretells her revival. In the fifth chapter of his prophecy he sees an ephah going forth and a woman sitting in it, and the interpreting angel said to him, “This is wickedness. And he cast her down into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.” And two women, with wings like the wings of a stork, lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven, and bore it “to build her an house in the land of Shinar [Babylon]. And when it is prepared she shall be set there in her own place.”

An “ephah” is a Jewish measure, and suggests or symbolizes trade and commerce. It “goeth forth,”

indicating the spread of the idea it represents. "This is their resemblance through all the earth," the prophet says, and the margin reads, "This is their eye in all the land." Some render it "the aim (eyes) of all the land (earth) are upon it," as though, interpreting it in the light of present facts, the focus of human interest in the time appointed would be business efficiency and success, and the gain and wealth and the delicacies and luxuries which they permit.

Of the woman in the ephah, the angel says, "This is wickedness." It is unholy gain therefore that is in mind, harmonizing with what Isaiah in the Old Testament, and James in the New, predict of the end of the present age. "The house of Jacob will be replenished from the east with silver and gold, and horses and chariots," and also, alas, with idols! Isaiah says a false worship will thus accompany the increase of riches and luxury in the last days, and the figure of the woman in the ephah is in perfect harmony therewith, for the wicked women of the Bible, whether in reality or type, are always associated with idolatry.

The place where this woman's house is to be built, "her own place" as the prophet says, "is the land of Shinar." Babylon therefore will be at once the center of the world's luxury and the world's idolatry. The stork's wings carry the woman there, for swiftly will these events accumulate when the time comes.

## V

But you ask the proof of it. In the first place,



**Zechariah's prophecy has not as yet been fulfilled. Nothing in subsequent history answers to it. What then does it mean, and when will it be?**

While these questions are awaiting answer, we open the book of Revelation, which shows us "things which shall be hereafter," and at chapter 14 we meet with this:

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Here is Babylon again, Babylon in the future, Babylon whose destruction is once more foretold. May not this be the fulfillment of Zechariah's vision? Some say, No, because in their judgment Babylon means Rome, papal Rome. In other words, they believe the language of Revelation is symbolic in this case, and that under the name of that ancient city we have a veiled reference to the papacy.

But why so? The city is named again in chapter 14, when she comes "in remembrance before God." This is at the time of the battle of Armageddon, and every student of the Bible knows that this battle is not to be fought in Europe in the neighbourhood of Rome, but in Asia and in proximity to "the land of Shinar."

Again, in chapters 17 and 18, she is referred to quite at length, and in the eighteenth more particularly is she described as "a habitation of demons, and a hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Shall we say that this

means Rome? I have some familiarity with the history of the papacy, and hold no brief for its defense. Its day of reckoning will surely come; but it seems to me that language like this is better fitted for what we know of Babylon than Rome.

But whether this be true or not, the chapter goes on to say, "All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, . . . and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." Without pausing to point out the untruthfulness of the identification of the first part of this verse with Rome, it must be admitted by all who have any acquaintance with her history that the last part does not belong to her. The merchants of the earth did not wax rich through the abundance of the delicacies of Rome, pagan or papal.

As a matter of fact, nine verses of the chapter are taken up with a lament of the merchants, shipmasters and sailors at the destruction of the city. No man buyeth their merchandise, or their cargo, any more, the vast range and character of which are so minutely described that Dean Alford said it more nearly suited London than Rome at any period of the latter's history.

Sir Henry Rawlinson is authority for the statement that the Euphrates, on which Babylon rests, is navigable for 500 miles, and with very little effort could become so for ships of large size. On the other hand, Rome has no port, and no shipmasters go there, so that, to quote Bullinger, if Rome be the city, then Rome is yet to become the great political, commercial and religious center of the world, with

both port and harbour. This revival of Rome, therefore, is about as difficult to believe as the revival of Babylon, and in either case it is simply a question of revival, and that at present is the point.

There are other verses in this chapter, the fourth to the seventh, which sometimes have been quoted in favour of the papal application. They begin thus: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." But this can hardly refer to Christians, who are thus being warned, as some say, to escape the papacy, for, as most teachers of dispensational truth believe, the faithful Church will have been caught up to meet the Lord before the time of which those verses speak. It refers more likely to Jews at that time residing in Babylon, which a reference to Isaiah 48 and Jeremiah 51 makes almost certain.

## VI

But some admit this literal Babylon in chapter 18, and yet see Rome in chapter 17. But we find no authority for thus separating the two. Indeed, the "harlot" of chapter 17 is distinctly called "Babylon the Great," and in a later verse identified as "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Had the mistaken idea never obtained that ancient Babylon was destroyed long ago in fulfillment of prophecy, the thought of confounding her with Rome would never have occurred.

This is not to say that in symbolizing Babylon the woman does not also symbolize the vast system of idolatry connected with it. It is for this reason

indeed that she is described as "the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth." The "earth" is more than Rome, or even Babylon herself, considered as a single city, but the latter was the fountain-head, "the mother," of all the systems of idolatry which have cursed the earth since Nimrod's day.

Romanism is one of these, but only one. As Dr. Seiss says in his "Lectures on the Apocalypse," the wine of her fornication "was already bottled and labelled before the first dispersion," i. e., prior to the tower of Babel, as recorded in Genesis 11.

In other words, there was idolatry before Rome, either pagan or papal. The Old Testament tells us of Moloch, and Ashtaroah, and Chemosh and Milcom, the gods of the nations round about, whose worship polluted Israel. These were the result of Babel, and under other names the same gods are affecting the thinking, the legislating and the worshipping of the nations of the earth to-day. Two-thirds of the people of the earth are still pagans, while the other third are largely Mohammedans, Jews, Romanists, infidels, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, or adherents of some other tainted and anti-Christian faith. In other words, the same old Babylon and her daughters still bear rule in the earth, and will continue to do so until Jesus comes.

It is this awful fact that gives such significance to the teaching of Scripture about the coming restoration of Babylon and her fall. That event is the logical conclusion of the history and the times of the Gentiles. "The civilization and the culture of the world will again become atheistic and man-centered,

and having described a circle, its cradle (Babylon) will become its grave."

That is the inspiration of, and that is what gives impetus to, Christian missions. It is a time to make haste to "testify the gospel of the grace of God."

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What other city of Mesopotamia in its reawakening affords a presumption for Babylon?
2. Where in the Bible does Babylon's history begin?
3. What distinguishes her at the first?
4. Trace the migration of the sons of Noah.
5. Who was Nimrod?
6. Give the reasons for the tower of Babel.
7. How is history repeating itself in this age?
8. In what Scriptures is the history of Nebuchadnezzar told?
9. Have you read Isaiah 13-14?
10. State the eight reasons for doubting that this prophecy was fulfilled in the overthrow of Babylon by Persia.
11. What was the nature of that blow on Babylon?
12. Give in your own words the quotation from Newton.
13. Have you read Zechariah 5?
14. Give in your own words an exposition of the vision of "the woman in the ephah."
15. In what chapter of Revelation is Babylon once more referred to?

16. To what more modern city is this prophecy sometimes applied?
17. Give three or four reasons against such an application.
18. Why cannot chapter 18: 4-7 refer to papal Rome?
19. Have you read Isaiah 43 and Jeremiah 51?
20. Why cannot chapters 17 and 18 be separated in their general application?
21. What does the "woman" of chapter 17 symbolize?
22. How is Babylon described with reference to idolatry?
23. What relation does "Romanism" bear to "Babylonianism"?
24. Name some of the idolatries before "Romanism," and their relation to Babylon.
25. What relation do they bear to current religious history?
26. What does this suggest as to the logical conclusion of "The Times of the Gentiles"?
27. What is its bearing on Christian Missions?

## XI

### THE DAY OF THE LORD—WHEN IT COMES AND WHAT IT MEANS

#### I

**E**VEN the cursory reader of the Bible will have observed the frequent phrase, "the day of the Lord," or "that day," or "in that day." It is found in the Old Testament prophets chiefly, notably Isaiah and Joel, but also in the New Testament.

Some illustrations follow: "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. 2:11); "And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel . . . shall stay upon the Lord" (10:20); "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand" (13:6); "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel 2:31); "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. 14:4); "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord" (Matt. 7:22); "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (2 Thess. 1:10); "The day of the Lord will come as a thief" (2 Pet. 3:10); "The battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14).

## II

It is natural to ask what this phrase means, and when the time will come to which it refers. There appear to be contradictions in the allusions to it. It contains blessings for the earth, and yet it also contains judgments. What relation does it bear to what is called the "Millennium"?

This last-named period has not been dealt with in these studies, but it has been assumed that our readers had some knowledge of it. "Millennium" means a thousand years, and is commonly used with reference to the thousand years named in Revelation 20:1-6, when Satan shall be shut up in the bottomless pit. It is the time of "the first resurrection," when Christ and His saints shall reign over the earth. The question is, will the day of the Lord come before, or during, or after the Millennium?

As a matter of fact, it will *cover all these three phases of time*. It begins just prior to the Millennium, it continues throughout that period, and extends somewhat beyond it. But before it begins, there are certain preliminary events which must take place. One of these is the translation of the Church to meet the Lord in the air, as foretold by Paul (1 Thess. 4:16-18). Another is the regathering of Israel to Palestine, on which we dwelt in a previous study. And a third is the federation of the Gentile nations (that is, the former nations of the Roman Empire) under a single head, as we saw in a study preceding this. This person the Scriptures sometimes describe as "the beast," sometimes as "the



man of sin," "the son of perdition," or "the Antichrist." Our previous studies have made us more or less familiar with all these things.

### III

On the supposition that these events have taken place, then the day of the Lord begins with the return of the Lord Himself in glory. When He comes for His Church (according to John 14:1-3, Phil. 3:20, 21, and 1 Thess. 4:13-18), He comes into the air and the Church is caught up to meet Him. But when, after a brief interval (possibly the seven years spoken of in Daniel 9), He comes in judgment on the nations, it will be to the earth that He descends. This is what is meant by "the return of the Lord himself in glory." See for this Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 24:29, 30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

The judgment of the nations follows, and Psalm 50, Zechariah 14:1-9, Matthew 25:31-46 and Revelation 19:11-21 find their fulfillment. Be sure to read these Scriptures, which are very full and graphic.

It is in the course of this judgment on the nations that there takes place the destruction of "the beast" and the "false prophet," with their followers, as referred to in the study preceding this. See in this instance Daniel 9:27, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 19:20 and corresponding places.

The binding of Satan is next in order (Rev. 20:1-3), and then we have the Millennium.

The binding of Satan, it should be borne in mind, is a necessary preliminary to the Millennium, or to

Christ's reign in righteousness. Necessary because he must be kept in restraint.

It is during the Millennium that the Kingdom of God is established in the earth.

This is the kingdom promised to David, as we have seen in our third study, and over which His son Jesus Christ shall reign. It is the kingdom of which Daniel prophesied, as brought out in our study on "The Times of the Gentiles." It is the kingdom that Christ came to set up at His first advent, and for which Israel and indeed the whole world has been looking, in a more or less darkened way, in all the centuries.

Revelation 20:4-6 refers to this kingdom very briefly, but for descriptions of its physical blessings one must turn to the Old Testament. The reason for this is that the nation of Israel shall then be dominant, to which people the promises were made in the Old Testament days.

Read the 72d Psalm, or look at Isaiah 2 for one of the pictures of the Millennium. There, at last, the poor are being judged with righteousness, the wild beasts are tamed, there is nothing to destroy in all God's holy mountain, and the earth is "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It is the time when "he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).

But it must not be imagined that because Satan is bound all this time, therefore there will be no sin in the earth. Isaiah 65:20 says of that time: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall

die an hundred years old; *but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*" It is the period when Christ *reigns*, but as another aptly says: "the fundamental idea of a reign, according to God, is the repression of evil. When all evil is suppressed, that is, in the eternal age, righteousness will dwell" in the earth, but it will not "reign."

#### IV

The Millennium lasts for a thousand years, but still "the day of the Lord" continues, and includes in its history another resurrection. This is the resurrection of the rest of the dead that did not rise when Christ came for His Church, because they were not part of it. In other words, these are the wicked dead who, in all the centuries from Adam, have died without faith, have died rejecting the testimony of God. Revelation 20:5 refers to this.

But, it may be asked, what about the righteous and regenerate who die during the Millennium? As to this we are unable to speak with clearness, unless we interpret Isaiah 65:20-22, mentioned above, as indicating that none but wicked and unbelieving people shall die during that period. If this be true, then at its close "death will have none to surrender except those who will stand before the Great White Throne, and who alas! will be cast into hell." In this connection think of that beautiful millennial promise in Isaiah 65:22: "For as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall wear out the work of their hands" (*Margin*).

Quoting William Lincoln, "How solemn it is that

the first resurrection, that of the righteous, is not contrasted by the Holy Spirit with the second resurrection, that of the wicked; but instead we read of the *first* resurrection and of the second *death*. The summoning of the wicked from their graves is termed a resurrection in judgment in John 5, but here the language is changed to 'the second death.' " Several times in this chapter the wicked are still termed dead, even after their resurrection. And dead indeed they are, not in the sense of non-existence, but in that of separation from God.

But the second resurrection seems to synchronize with the unbinding of Satan, who goes out again "to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, and to gather them to battle" (Rev. 20:8). This is one of the strangest and most startling facts associated with the whole teaching of the Millennium. It thus appears that while during that period Christ will be obeyed and served by the nations, yet to no small extent it will be on their part a feigned obedience and an unwilling service. See Zechariah 14:16-19. Men will need, in that day as well as in this, to be "born again" in order to "enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:3-7).

The nations will be ready to be again deceived, when Satan comes back into his power "for a little season," and the battle to which he shall gather them will be another attack upon Jerusalem, "the camp of the saints about and the beloved city" (Rev. 20:9). It is at this time that God has His last and most awful conflict with man in the flesh. "And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

The destruction of Satan follows. He is "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where the beast and the false prophet were cast at the beginning of the Millennium (Rev. 19:20), and he is there "tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

Revelation 20:3 teaches that Satan "*must* be loosed a little season." Why the "*must*"? Is it not that man may be tested or tried again? He had been tried in the garden of Eden, when he possessed the knowledge of good only; he had been tried again, when he possessed the knowledge of "good and evil," amid evil only. But now finally, at the close of the Millennium, he must be tried when he possesses the knowledge of good and evil, amid only good. Then it will be evident that, let the circumstances be what they may, man himself is not good (Lincoln).

Thus the millennial day that had dawned so brightly on earth ends as all the preceding ones ended—in disaster, so far as man is concerned. Man without Christ can only fail.

## V

The next great event divinely scheduled in the day of the Lord is the Last Judgment. Not the "general" judgment, as it is often erroneously called, for there is no such judgment; but only the judgment of the dead, the wicked dead already spoken of.

And they were "judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." They had an opportunity to be judged in Christ by

faith in His blessed Name, but this they wickedly rejected. They chose rather to stand upon their own record, and not His. Their "works" were that in which they gloried, and God kept an accurate record of them. But their value was nil, for "whatsoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

"This is the second death" relatively to their preceding physical death in unbelief, but it is not annihilation, as shown by Revelation 19:20 and 20:10. As the Scofield Reference Bible reminds us, "after one thousand years in the lake of fire the beast and the false prophet are still there and undestroyed." "Forever and ever" or "to the ages of the ages" are the words, and that they carry the awful thought of unendingness is evidenced by the fact that they are used in Hebrews 1:8 of the very Throne of God itself.

May the unbelieving and unsaved reader take warning from this solemn fact, and before it is too late fly for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Give some illustrations of the Scriptural use of the phrase, "The Day of the Lord," or its equivalent.
2. What seeming contradictions are observed in the use of it?

3. What does "Millennium" mean and with what time is it identified?
4. Will "The Day of the Lord" come before, during, or after the Millennium?
5. What three events precede "The Day of the Lord"?
6. When does that "Day" begin?
7. What is meant by "the return of the Lord Himself in glory"?
8. What follows this return?
9. Have you read the Scriptures indicated?
10. What events take place in the course of the judgments on the nations?
11. What is a necessary preliminary to the Millennium, and why?
12. What parallel is suggested here?
13. What is established in the earth during the Millennium?
14. Identify this "kingdom" in other Scriptures.
15. Where are its physical blessings more particularly revealed, and why?
16. Have you read Psalm 72 and Isaiah 11?
17. Will there be sin in the earth during the Millennium?
18. What distinction do you see between righteousness "reigning" and righteousness "dwelling" in the earth?
19. Who are the persons in the second resurrection?
20. How do some interpret Isaiah 65:20-22?
21. How is the word "dead" in Revelation 20 to be understood?

22. With what does the "second resurrection" or rather the "second death," synchronize?
23. What startling fact does this bring forward?
24. When does God have His final conflict with man in the flesh?
25. What event follows?
26. Why the word "must" in Revelation 20:3?
27. What is the next great event in "The Day of the Lord"?
28. Who are judged here and on what basis are they judged?
29. What name is given to that which follows this judgment?
30. What proves that the second death is not annihilation?
31. What is the warning for the unsaved?



## XII

### DOES THE BIBLE TEACH A GENERAL JUDGMENT?

#### I

**S**OME questions raised by the previous chapter when it appeared in the serial form, related to the interpretation of various passages in the book of Revelation culminating in its teaching concerning the last judgment. Most of them were too lacking in general interest to warrant attention in any special way; but an exception is made of one which asks whether Revelation 17:8 refers to a "limited atonement." The passage reads, "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world."

The thought of the atonement is not to be excluded from these words, but it is not in the foreground. The subject of the whole verse is the "beast," the Antichrist, the secular despot, possibly an incarnation of Satan, who will ascend out of the abyss and later go into perdition, and who will rule over the earth during the period of the tribulation still ahead. For further information about him, see Chapter VIII.

"They that dwell on the earth shall wonder after him," or, as Revelation 13:3 says, "all the world

wondered after the beast.” And no wonder they wondered, when we are told in another Scripture (2 Thess. 2:4) that “he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God,” and in still another (Rev. 13:2-17), that there is a false prophet with him who “deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the miracles which he had power to do.” “Wonder” in this case means not simple astonishment, but a surrender of will and judgment, bringing the one who wonders under the sway and spell of the one who is wondered at.

Yet as the verse states, this will not be true of all. In Elijah’s time there was an elect remnant who bowed not the knee to Baal (Rom. 11:1-5), and so will it be in the great tribulation. Although the Church will have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, as we believe the Scriptures teach (1 Thess. 4:17), yet there will be an elect remnant on the earth, both of Jews and Gentiles—converted it may be by the very event of the Church’s translation—who will prefer death to allegiance to this son of perdition. (Read Rev. 6:9-11; 7:14; 13:15-17.) These are described by contrast, in the question presented to us, as those whose names were “written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world.”

What troubles the inquirer is that some names were written there while others were not, and only the first are saved, while the others presumably are lost. His is a doctrinal or theological question that hardly comes within the range of this work, which cannot properly discuss such matters as a limited or an unlimited atonement. But this much may

be said, doubtless without controversy: (1) that the book and the writing of the names are figures of speech, indicating God's foreknowledge of the saved and the lost; (2) that His foreknowledge is not necessarily identical with His foreordination of some to eternal life and some to eternal death; (3) that the atonement of Jesus Christ is sufficient for the sin of the world (John 1:29); (4) that *all* may be saved who are willing to be saved (Rev. 22:17).

## II

This leads to the question of the final judgment referred to in Revelation 20:11-15, where the words recur: "Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." This was dealt with in the last chapter on "The Day of the Lord, When It Comes and What It Means," where it was said that it is erroneously called the "general" judgment. By the "general" judgment is commonly understood a judgment of all mankind at one time and one place and on precisely the same basis, which does not appear to be the Bible teaching on that subject.

But, says the inquirer, what about Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10, and Matthew 25:31-46? These passages will be quoted later, but in the meantime let us reflect that the day of judgment, as presented in the Bible, is not a day of twenty-four hours merely, but one covering a great length of time. "The Day of the Lord," mentioned before, is equivalent to the day of judgment, and it covers at least a

thousand years, *beginning with judgment, ending with judgment, and characterized by judgment more or less, all the way through.*

1. *There is a judgment of Christians*, true believers, the members of Christ's body, which will take place when Christ comes for His Church. It is to this that Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 apply. The first reads: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." And the second, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The pronoun "we" in these cases refers only to Christians, as may be seen from the contexts, and especially from the introduction to both epistles (see Rom. 1:1, 7 and 2 Cor. 1:1). This is not a judgment unto condemnation, but rather an inquiry into the conduct of disciples, in order to give unto them "before the eyes of all a gracious reward of tried fidelity," as van Oosterzee expresses it. Compare further 1 Corinthians 3:2-15.

2. *There is a judgment awaiting Israel as a nation*, which shall take place on the earth, and doubtless with particular intensity in Palestine, whither that nation will have returned at first in an unconverted state. The time will be after the translation of the Church, and when Christ will be revealed with His saints and with His holy angels for the deliverance of "the children of thy people"; "and there shall be a time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that

time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

That it is a final judgment for some of them at least seems involved in the language which follows: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

### III

3. *There is a judgment of the Gentile nations*, also on the earth, commencing perhaps with the judgment upon Israel and following after it. It is to this that Matthew 25:31-46 applies, beginning: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

Observe that those who are here judged are called "nations," and the meaning is living nations, *i. e.*, nations existing on the earth at the time. It does not refer to those who have died, and nothing is said about a resurrection having taken place. For parallel Scriptures see Isaiah 34: 1, 2; Ezekiel 39, the whole chapter, where, as in other instances in the Old Testament, the word "heathen" should be rendered "nations"; Joel 3:2; Zechariah 14:1, 2.

Observe also that the ground on which this judgment is passed is peculiar, different from any other judgment named or to be named. The sheep are divided from the goats according to the kindness or

unkindness shown to a third class of persons called the "brethren" of the Judge. This third class is taken to mean Israel or the Jews, and doubtless during the tribulation period.

There is no mention of a formal trial here and no opening of books, but "a calling up of rebellious or obedient subjects and the passing upon them of their sentence of penalty or reward." Nothing could be more distinct from the circumstances of the last judgment, which will be spoken of in a moment. And yet there is a finality to this also, for they that have done wickedly go into everlasting punishment, "but the righteous into life eternal." For parallel scripts, see Jer. 25:15-33; Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:9-14; Joel 3:2; also 2 Thess. 2:8; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 19:11-21.

That there is much difficulty in the application or interpretation of certain parts of this scene of judgment is not disputed, but it would require more than one chapter of the present length to deal with it in any satisfactory way. Here we can speak only in general terms and state conclusions in broad outlines.

#### IV

4. *There is a final judgment* (Rev. 22:11-15).

(1) Note the time, after the thousand years (9-10). How long after is not revealed; but whether it be brief or extended, it clearly differentiates it from all preceding judgments.

(2) Note the location, not in heaven, neither on earth, for the time has come foretold by Peter, "in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the

earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).

(3) Note the characterization of the judged. They are the dead; and by "the dead" is doubtless meant all who have died from the very beginning, excepting those who have been judged in the earlier periods. In other words, *all men* will be judged at some time. There will be no exception to this rule; but the judgment will not be general in that all will be judged *together* and by precisely the same rule.

(4) Note the record and the basis of the judgment: "they were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." No believers are in this judgment, it would appear, for the thought of faith appears to be excluded from it, as well as that of reward. See also Christ's promise in John 5:24. There are two stages in this judgment as another puts it: first, a reference to the "other books" to show that the works of the wicked deserve death; and second, the opening of "the Book of Life," to show that by unbelief they have rejected life.

(5) Note the awful sentence of the judgment; "the second death," "the lake of fire."

May God deliver the reader from it. And this will He do beyond a peradventure, to all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and confess Him as Lord.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What is the subject of Revelation 17:8?
2. Why will "all the world wonder after the beast"?

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3. What does "wonder" mean in this case?
4. What exceptions will there be to those that "wonder" after him?
5. Have you read the verses referred to in Revelation?
6. Recite the four comments made on Revelation 17:8.
7. What is commonly meant by the expression "general judgment"?
8. What Scriptures are frequently but erroneously used to establish such a judgment?
9. What expression does the Bible use as synonymous with the day of judgment?
10. How many distinct "judgments" are pointed out in this lesson?
11. Explain what is meant by a judgment of Christians, and give the Scriptures which prove it.
12. Do the same for the judgment awaiting Israel as a nation.
13. When will the judgment of the Gentile nations commence?
14. Expound the parable of the sheep and the goats.
15. How should the word "heathen" commonly be rendered?
16. What five things are to be noted concerning the final judgment?



### XIII

## THE MILLENNIUM: WHEN, WHAT AND WHERE?

### I

**I**T has been thought best that the previous chapters should be supplemented by one on the Millennium. Considerable has been said on that subject as we have progressed, but nothing in the way of a sustained or continuous treatment such as would interest and instruct a beginner in the study of prophecy.

The word "Millennium" is a combination of two Latin words, *mille*, a thousand, and *annus*, a year, and means a thousand years. In its Biblical or theological use, it finds its origin in Revelation 20:1-7, where it is employed six times in speaking of such coming and momentous events as the binding of Satan in the bottomless pit, "that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled," and the resurrection of the saints who shall reign with Christ over the earth during the same period.

However, while this is the only place in Scripture where the "thousand years" is named specifically, yet nevertheless the period itself is identified in many ways throughout the Bible. Indeed, the Flem-

ing H. Revell Company once published a goodly-sized volume by the distinguished Bible scholar, Dr. Nathaniel West, entitled, "The Thousand Years in Both Testaments," from whose opening pages we quote the following:

"What we find in the New Testament as its outcome in respect to the ages and the kingdom, has already lain in the bosom of the Old Testament from the beginning. The closing part of the New Testament (Rev. 20: 1-7 for example) is but the full flower of which the opening part of the Old Testament was the precious seed, the kingdom, one and the same in essence all the way. Nothing appears in the later revelation that was not hid in the earlier; nothing in John that was not in Moses. . . . Such is the organic and genetic character of revelation and of prophecy, that if 'the thousand years' are not in Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets, they have no right to be in John."

## II

The task would be fascinating to trace from the beginning the prophecies of the Bible which point to that "good time coming" which we call the Millennium.

Take the earliest of all, in Genesis 3: 15, where it is promised that the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. In a former chapter it was shown that this "Seed" is Jesus Christ, and the "serpent," Satan, the bruising of whose head means the destruction of his power longer to hurt men. This at once parallels the verse in Revelation,

which speaks of him as being bound and shut up in the bottomless pit a thousand years. His final doom is not reached even then; but if for a thousand years he is restrained from doing evil in the earth, think what that will mean in the peace and happiness of mankind! This is one of the features of the Millennium.

We pass to that other promise, attached to the call of Abraham in Genesis 12: 3, "in thee all the families of the earth shall be blessed." We saw in former studies the extent to which "all the families of the earth" are already blessed in Abraham, whose Seed is Jesus Christ; but we also saw that this was only a part of that blessing which is yet to be, and which approaches nearer its fulfillment in that same Millennium.

Hastening to the time of David, Abraham's kingly offspring, we listen to the Messiah saying in the second Psalm, "I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." This points to the same period, and shows us our blessed Lord reigning over the whole earth, with all of the peace and righteousness upon the earth which that implies.

The prophet Isaiah comments upon this reign, saying, "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth." The blessing extends to the animal creation too, for we

remember the familiar words of the same prophet, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (11:3-6).

Israel, or the Jew, will be specially favoured at that time, for, as Amos says, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David [i. e., restore his kingdom], and I will build it as in the days of old. . . . Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed, and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; and they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (9:11-15).

### III

The joyous refrain is continued in the New Testament, and Jesus, in view of His coming crucifixion and death, instructs His disciples concerning self-denial, saying: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? . . . For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father and his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." The second

coming of our Lord is thus declared to be one of the features of the Millennium, and naturally the great feature; for, as we have seen previously, it is His coming alone that can introduce that period or make it a possibility. But He is coming to judge His people and to dispense to them the reward of their fidelity, which will make it a happy time for them.

In the Acts, Peter refers to it. He exhorts the unbelieving Jews who crucified their Lord to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out. And then he adds: "That so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus, whom the heavens must receive until the time of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began." It is the time of the "restoration of all things," and yet not all things absolutely, but all those things of which the holy prophets have spoken, and which a consensus of their writings shows will be brought to fruition in the Millennium, when Jesus comes again (3:19-21).

Of course, the Epistles hold much of the same thought, but that thrilling revelation through Paul in the eighth of Romans challenges our attention first. He is comforting believers under "the sufferings of this present time," which "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." And then he uses these words, so often quoted, but so little appreciated in their bearing on millennial conditions:

“For the earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

This passage parallels that already quoted from Isaiah, pointing out that the earthly blessings it portrays are vitally associated with the resurrection of the saints.

Thus, not to prolong this running comment any further, we are brought once more to Revelation 20:1-7.

#### IV

The reader is asked to carefully read this passage, and then answer the following question: Suppose it had now passed before your eyes for the first time, and suppose you were entirely free from any bias of mind concerning it, what would it naturally suggest to you? Would it not seem to teach at least eight things:

(1) That Satan will be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit a thousand years;

(2) That during this period the nations will not be deceived or misled by him;

(3) That thrones of judgment shall be occupied by risen saints and martyrs;

(4) That these shall live and reign as kings and priests with Christ;

(5) That the rest of the dead shall remain in their graves until the period is ended;

(6) That this is the first resurrection;

(7) That there is no more death for them that partake of its blessedness;

(8) That at its close Satan shall be loosed again.

*This is the Millennium. This is the kingdom of the Messiah on this earth, which is predicted throughout the Old Testament. If we are intelligent in the Scriptures, this is what we mean every time we pray, "Thy kingdom come." This is how almost the whole Church understood these prophecies for the first three centuries of the Christian era. As another says, "It was not until Christians began to mistake the world's patronage of a corrupted Christianity for the commencement of the Millennium [i. e., at the fourth century in the days of Constantine], that they adopted those spiritualizing theories of interpretation which made these prophecies teach something else."*

And what is that "something else" which they are thus made to teach? Namely, that the resurrection and the reigning of the saints and martyrs in this passage merely designates a revival of their spirit in the earth. They say it merely means the universal spread and predominance of the principles of Christianity for which they suffered. But, as the English writer quoted above asks: "How could such

a revival or predominance of the principles of the martyrs be a reward for *them*, while as to their bodies they are still in the grave? Is this the reigning with Christ which is to more than compensate for their suffering with Him? We think not."

Of course we are not now speaking of the eternal age. We are not speaking of the period following the Millennium, when, according to 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Christ will deliver up "the kingdom to God, even the Father." When that time comes, "then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." But we are distinctly taught that His preceding (millennial) reign continues until then, and it is of this (millennial) reign that this present chapter treats.

This is the reign promised to every one "that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end," to whom He will "give authority over the nations" (Rev. 2:26) and they "shall *reign on the earth*" (5:10). In the eternal age they cannot have authority over the nations on the earth, for there will be no nations in the present sense of that term; and as for the earth itself, it will then have fled away, and "there was found no place for them" (Rev. 20:11).

But a further word of explanation is necessary to the effect that the reigning of Christ and His saints over the nations of the earth does not involve their possession of fleshly bodies like our present ones, nor their actual habitation on the soil of the earth.

Christ's resurrection body is an indication of what



the resurrection bodies of the saints may be. He could pass in and out of closed doors. He could be present and could vanish in an instant. He could ascend up into heaven, or remain upon the earth at His will; and the same is likely to be true of the saints, as we gather from 1 Corinthians 15:42-49.

And as to a habitation on the soil of the earth: Does not King George reign over India with his throne in England, and does not President Wilson exercise authority over the Philippines from a capital at Washington? Why then should there be difficulty about the saints exercising dominion on the earth from their location in the air with Christ?

The air, it should be remembered, is one of the "heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12), and there are we to be "forever with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). It is from that vantage ground that the present god of this world exercises his power over the nations of the earth (Eph. 2:2); and what is to hinder the saints of God doing the same, when they with Christ shall occupy that domain from which He shall have been cast out (Rev. 12:7-12)?

## V

To sum up, the millennium is a thousand years of peace and righteousness, of prosperity and plenty, to be realized upon this earth. It will follow the second coming of Christ, at which time the Church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 3:1-4), shall have been caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-18). But though the saints will thus

have been translated, they will not be deprived of a share in that blessing and its glory, for they shall reign with Christ on the earth, having authority over the nations.

This blessing not only follows but is consequent upon the second coming of Christ, and for the reason outlined above, that He will then bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are ended.

The binding of Satan is associated with the divine judgments that shall fall upon the disobedient nations, and the subjection of those nations to the rule of Christ. The earth then shall be governed righteously; Israel shall be converted; idolatry shall cease; all false religions and false worships shall be put away, and, the material and animal creation sharing in the benefaction, the waste places shall "break forth into joy," and "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa. 52:10).

But one thing more. When we speak of Christ subduing His enemies by power, and of the Millennium being introduced by His coming and His judgments, we must not forget the name and the work of the Holy Spirit. As we are reminded by another, so far as the conversion of souls is concerned in the millennial age, or any other age, the Holy Spirit is the agent by which it is accomplished.

As soon as the Antichrist arises in power, and even before Jesus comes in judgment on him and the nations under his leadership, the Holy Spirit

is promised to a faithful remnant in Israel. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (Isa. 59:19-20).

It is significant that this work of the Holy Spirit does not render unnecessary the personal coming of the Redeemer, and that it is in connection with that coming and as a forerunner of it that the Holy Spirit is thus named. Moreover, Scriptures might be multiplied to show that this same gracious agency shall continue to abide with Israel throughout the whole of the millennial period. See, for example, Isaiah 39:11-15; 44:2-5; and Zechariah 12:10. But Joel goes still further and teaches that in that day the Holy Spirit shall be poured out "upon all flesh" (2:28, 29).

We think that an accredited student of prophecy is right when he says that "the judgments which accompany the Lord's return will have purged out the obstinately wicked of that generation, while the survivors, awed by those judgments and compelled to bow to the scepter of Jesus Christ, will, by this universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, be generally turned in heart to the Lord."

"Generally," be it observed, but not entirely or universally. Every soul of man will not be converted, and regeneration will be as necessary then as now, if one shall enter into the Kingdom of God. But in a sense or in a degree which until then the earth never will have known, it will be a time when

“the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (Isa. 40:5).

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What is the meaning of “Millennium”?
2. What is its Biblical origin?
3. Is Revelation 20 the only place where the period is referred to in the Bible?
4. Give in your own words the quotation from Dr. West.
5. Identify two early promises of the Millennium in Genesis.
6. Quote one each from the Psalms, from Isaiah, and from Amos.
7. Where in the Gospels are found the words quoted from Jesus?
8. Expound Acts 3:19-21 in your own words.
9. With what great event are the earthly blessings of the Millennium vitally associated?
10. Name the eight features of the Millennium in Revelation 20:1-7.
11. When were the spiritualizing theories of the Millennium adopted, and why?
12. In what are these spiritualizing theories summed up?
13. How does an English writer reply to this?
14. How is the millennial age distinguished from the eternal age to follow?
15. Does the earthly reign of Christ and His saints involve their possession of fleshly bodies and actual residence on the soil?

16. Illustrate your answer to the above.
17. In what sense is the "air" employed in 1 Thessalonians 4:17?
18. Sum up the teaching on the Millennium thus far.
19. What relation does the work of the Holy Spirit bear to millennial blessing?
20. Quote Isaiah 59:19, 20 and Joel 2:28, 29.

## XIV

### CHRIST'S FUTURE EARTHLY REIGN

#### I

**A**MONG the questions raised by the previous studies in their serial form was one as to whether there would be a second incarnation of Christ. On the supposition that He is to reign on the earth, it was supposed that He must be in the flesh as a man.

He is indeed to reign over the earth, but this does not make it necessary that He shall reign on the earth. The earlier chapter on the Millennium referred to this. That "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. 14:4), we accept literally; but it does not necessarily carry with it the thought that He shall remain there, or in any other earthly locality, throughout the millennial reign. Indeed, the touching of the mountain with His feet is the signal for its division into two halves and the formation of a great valley in between. As the prophet Nahum says, "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world and all that dwell therein" (1:5).

But as to a second incarnation, this is unnecessary and of course impossible, except in the sense that all things with God are possible. In His resurrection

body, Christ could be present or vanish in an instant. He could ascend up into heaven or remain upon the earth at His will. It is in this body that He now appears in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24), and it is in this body that we may look for Him to come again, as He was seen to go (Acts 1:11).

Indeed, there is danger in pressing the thought of a reincarnation of Christ, for such is the teaching of many of the false religions now being imported from the east, like Buddhism and Theosophy and the Order of the Star of the East. They believe that a great teacher will soon appear in the world, and they would have Christians suppose that he is our Saviour. But such is not true, for the Christ they speak of is not the one revealed in the Bible. Their Christ is named in the same breath with Buddha and Confucius and Zoroaster and other leaders of Pagan cults. They make no mention of sin, of sacrificial atonement, of judgment, of the Holy Spirit. They are simply preparing the way for the Antichrist, and we need to be on our guard against them.

## II

An interesting letter was received from a correspondent who took the position that the Transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17) was His coming in His kingdom in miniature, and we think the position was well taken. Quoting from the present writer's "Prophecy and the Lord's Return":

"When He comes the second time, He will appear on the earth and yet He will be apart from

the earth in the air, and here (in the Transfiguration) we see Him in that relationship to both.

"When He comes the second time, it will be *in glory*, and here we see His face shining 'as the sun,' His raiment 'white as the light.'

"When He comes the second time, the dead saints will be with Him, and here we see Moses, representing that resurrection, talking with Him.

"When He comes the second time, the saints who are alive and remain on the earth shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Him 'in the air,' and here we see Elijah, representing that translocation, also talking with Him.

"When He comes the second time, Israel in the flesh will sustain a mediatorial relationship to Him, and the glorified Church on behalf of the Gentile nations; and here we see Peter, James and John, representing Israel in the flesh, occupying this place of wonderful privilege and fellowship.

"Thus appears the whole story of the second coming in a kind of picture, and yet it is all real. No wonder that it brought so much encouragement to the disappointed and wondering disciples."

That the correspondent was not in error in thus conceiving of the Transfiguration is made sure by the words of one of the witnesses on that occasion. Read, for example, Peter's testimony in his second epistle, where he says (1:16-18):

"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.



“For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

“And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

Here we have not only Peter's testimony to the fact, but his inspired comment upon the testimony. The transfiguration, he says, was “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Not that it was exhaustive of His power in that direction, nor that it meant His coming in its entirety; but as a foregleam of that momentous event in its various particulars, it established its certainty as something that is to be.

### III

And yet all this testimony is not satisfying to some. Another correspondent wrote, “We do not understand at all from Scripture that the people, whom God is now calling out from all the nations for His Name, are to reign with Him over the millennial earth.” And then he states the grounds of his objection. It will be interesting and instructive to consider them:

(1) He says: “There is to be no millennial earth here. The only place in the Bible that speaks of a thousand year reign is Revelation 20:4, and it does not at all indicate that it is to take place here on this earth.”

Where, then, is it to take place, may we ask? The

preceding chapter, to which this one bears the closest relationship, is speaking of the earth. There are the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is He seen smiting the nations and ruling them with a rod of iron. Immediately following the account of the thousand years' reign, we are told that Satan, loosed from his prison-house, goes out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about the beloved city." It is not until after this that the earth and the heaven flee away.

In the chapter on "The Millennium: When, What and Where?" it was stated that, while the thousand years specifically is named but once in the Bible, yet the period to which that phrase refers is named again and again. We quoted Moses, David, Isaiah, Amos, Peter, Paul, John and Jesus Christ. Indeed, as Nathaniel West says: "There is a text in what is known among scholars as the 'little apocalypse of Isaiah' (24:21-23) which so closely resembles Revelation 20:1-4 as to be called its companion piece."

(2) The correspondent quotes: "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus . . . which had not worshipped the beast, . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," and adds, "This certainly does not include us of the present time. We have not been beheaded, and are not likely to be. In other words, we are not martyrs for Christ, and it seems pre-

sumptuous to put ourselves in the company of these martyrs for this special reign. We who are caught up at the coming of the Lord will be in the general reign with Christ, but not in this special reign."

That he is not very clear as to this "special reign" is evident from a later statement in which he says that it is a reign "with his martyrs somewhere else than on this earth, and that it is now taking place."

There are two errors here. In the first place, Christ, considered as to His human nature, Christ the God-man, is not now reigning anywhere. As God, He is reigning over the universe, of course, just as He has done ever since He created it; but as the risen and glorified man He is "sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb. 10: 12, 13). In that day, however, *i. e.*, when His enemies are made His footstool, He will come again, "and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1: 32, 33).

In the second place, the reign of the martyrs cannot now be taking place, because the martyrs themselves have not yet been martyred. They are the martyrs of the tribulation period which is yet to come, and in which they will suffer at the hands of the Antichrist (see Rev. 13: 15-18).

And finally, it is no presumption for us "to put ourselves in the company of these martyrs," because the context itself does that for us. For example, it says that "This is the first resurrection," and good exegesis makes this harmonize with "the resurrec-

tion of the just" (Luke 14:14), and "the resurrection of life" (John 5:29). All believers are counted in these resurrections, and necessarily in that.

But why are the martyrs singled out? For a very good reason indeed. Up until this time, the Church had been in the air with Christ, and was now about to enter with Him upon His earthly reign. Meanwhile Antichrist had been reigning on the earth, and these martyrs had refused to acknowledge him and had paid for their loyalty with their life. But now he is tormented and they are comforted. He is bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, and they are raised from the dead and exalted to a place with the Church, which is Christ's body, and they reign with Christ a thousand years.

#### IV

In the foregoing it has been assumed that, when Christ comes in the air and the Church is caught up to meet Him there, it is from that location that He and His Bride shall reign over the earth.

Such is a common understanding among premillennialists, but it is not by any means the only one.

For example, Luthardt, a distinguished German commentator, says unhesitatingly, "The Church does not remain in the air, nor is she retired into heaven, but, after her translation, accompanies the Bridegroom hitherward to the Holy Place," by which he means some glorified place on the earth in which she shall be separated from the as yet unglorified part of humanity.

Dr. Nathaniel West agrees with this, and warns

us not to "rob corporeity of its rights in the resurrection, or dissolve under the idea of 'glory' the resurrection body into a gauzy texture ballooning in the sky."

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Is it necessary that in the Millennium Christ shall reign on the earth?
2. If the above is answered negatively how can it be harmonized with Zechariah 14:4?
3. Is a second incarnation of Christ necessary, and if not, why not?
4. What spiritual danger follows in the wake of such a thought?
5. How may the transfiguration of Christ be regarded?
6. Show the correspondences between that event and His Second Coming.
7. Quote 2 Peter 1:16-18.
8. How would you prove the earthly character of the millennial reign?
9. Have you looked up "the little apocalypse of Isaiah"?
10. Is Christ considered from the human side now reigning anywhere?
11. When will He begin to reign over the house of Jacob?
12. How would you answer the objection that the reign of the martyrs is now taking place?
13. Why is it not presumptuous for Christian believers to put themselves in the company of the martyrs?

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- 14. Why, then, are the martyrs singled out in Revelation 20?**
- 15. What contrary opinion about Christ's reigning on the earth is held by some?**
- 16. What possible confusion of thought on their part is suggested?**

## XV

### THE AGE AND ITS APOSTASY

#### I

**T**HERE are certain strategic words in the study of prophecy which, if made clear, would do much to solve many of its difficulties. For this reason it is proposed in this and another chapter to attempt a glossary of such words.

Take the word "age," for example. How often it is used! "This age" is spoken of; "the god of this age," "the end of the age," "the millennial age," etc. What does it mean? The word occurs some forty times in the New Testament though it is commonly translated "world" (Greek "aion"). Here are some instances: "The harvest is the end of the world" ("age"); "what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world" ("age"); "be not conformed to this world" ("age"); "the powers of the world ("age") to come." (See Matt. 13:39; 24:3; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 6:5.) It represents various periods of time, but of that we need not now speak.

A more interesting question is the object or reason of the "ages." Chapell's "Theology" suggests that it may be the opposing forces of Satan and his hosts in the heavenly places that causes them; for he regards them as so many stages in the divine warfare, so many epochs in the execution of the plan of re-

demption. There are concealments of God's purpose in the ages which may be necessary in order to obtain victory (Matt. 24:43); or, as he remarks further, even the cycles of the heavenly bodies may have something to do with them, for "there is a wonderful harmony between the material and immaterial worlds."

However, for our present purpose it is more practical to observe that "age" is commonly used as synonymous with "dispensation" (Eph. 1:10), which means "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." The Scofield Reference Bible speaks of seven dispensations:

(1) That of Innocency, when man was subjected to a very simple test, and warned of the consequences of disobedience (Gen. 2:17).

(2) That of Conscience, when man was responsible to do all known good, and abstain from all known evil, and to approach God through sacrifice (Gen. 3:23-7:24).

(3) That of Human Government, when man became responsible to govern the world for God (Gen. 8:1-11:9, especially 9:5, 6).

(4) That of Promise, which was exclusively Israelitish, when the descendants of Abraham came under a covenant, wholly gracious and unconditional, and which lasted until, at Sinai, Israel accepted the law (Gen. 12:1-Exod. 19:8).

(5) That of Law, extending from Sinai to Calvary (Exod. 19:9-John 19:30).

(6) That of Grace, which begins with the death



and resurrection of Jesus Christ and extends to His coming again (John 1:17; 2 Cor. 6:2).

(7) That of the Kingdom, or the Millennial Age, which continues from Christ's Second Coming onward for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-4).

Some find an eighth dispensation revealed, that of the "Fullness of the Times" (Eph. 1:10), and identified by them with the age when Christ shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28), a subject so large as to demand a separate article to define it.

It will be recalled that all of these "ages" passed into one another without any change of a catastrophic character except the Flood. There were changes revolutionary in principle, but they were not felt immediately and universally over the earth or over the race. In some cases they were slow of accomplishment or in reaching a consummation. The age of Innocency ended in the expulsion of man from Eden. The change to the dispensation of Promise effected little at first, outside of the family of Abraham; while that from Law to Grace, although in some particulars the most revolutionary of all, came to pass without the knowledge of the world beyond Jerusalem. And how much of the crucifixion was known or understood even within its walls, and how little were its general inhabitants affected by it!

Such may be the case when the present age passes into that of the Millennium. The descent of Christ into the air and the translation of His body, the Church, to meet Him there, may not seriously, nor for very long, disturb the rest of mankind. A seven

days' wonder, it may soon be forgotten. And the judgments to follow on the ungodly nations may seem at first only a repetition of the present "frightfulness" and its accompanying tribulations. Indeed, the effects of the passing of this age into the next will be continuous doubtless for a thousand years. (See the earlier chapter, "The Day of the Lord—When It Comes and What It Means.")

## II

"Apostasy" is another word worth dwelling on because of its large place in the study of prophecy, and because of the serious relation it bears to the current history of the Church and the world. The word is not in the Bible, but that for which it stands is frequently named in the New Testament.

What does it mean? But first, what does it *not* mean?

An apostate is not an ordinary unbeliever in Christianity, a pagan for example, who has never heard of Christ and His Gospel. Neither is he a back-slidden Christian—one who, through sin, has lost his fellowship with God, and for whom forgiveness and cleansing wait on his penitent return (1 John 1:9). An apostate is not one who simply errs as to some specific truth of revelation, of which he may be as yet ignorant (Acts 19:1-6). Nor is he a heretic merely, for, as another says, heresy may be accounted for by the snare of Satan, and at the same time be consistent with the holding of a measure of the true faith (2 Tim. 2:25, 26).

An apostate is different from any of these, in that

he is one who once knew, or professed to know and to hold the truth of Christianity, but who has altogether and definitely renounced it. That is not to say that he has renounced the whole of it, or the outward appearance and the profession of it; but that he has renounced the vital part of it, the Godhead of Christ and redemption through His sacrificial death; that which really makes one's life a part of the life of God, through the reconciliation of the cross (Phil. 3:18; 2 Pet. 2:11).

The "apostasy," therefore, is a condition in the professing Church that expresses a definite and permanent falling away on the part of many from "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

The parables of our Lord in the thirteenth of Matthew all predict this, but very especially that of the wheat and the tares, where "the supineness of the servants affords opportunity to the enemy to sow tares where good seed had been already sown." The evil once introduced would be removed only by judgment at the end of the age.

The Church had not been formed when these parables were spoken; but hardly had it come into existence before they began to be fulfilled. Listen to Paul in his address to the elders at Ephesus: "I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). Compare also his words to the Church at Rome (Rom. 16:17, 18), to that at Corinth (2 Cor.

12:20, 21), Galatia (Gal. 4:8-10), Philippi (Phil. 3:18, 19), Colosse (Col. 2:4-23), and the well-known predictions in 2 Thessalonians 2, 1 Timothy 4, and 2 Timothy 3.

### III

To dwell on that in 2 Thessalonians 2. In his first epistle to this church, Paul had enlarged upon that stage of the second coming of Christ associated with the translation of the Church to meet Him in the air (4:13-16). But in this second epistle he does the same for that later stage of the same event, when Christ shall descend from heaven with His holy angels in flaming fire to judge the wicked and disobedient (1:6-9). It would seem that some in that Church supposed that this had already come, that their tribulations at the hands of persecutors were nothing less than part of the general sorrow to be experienced in the "Day of the Lord."

But Paul disabuses their minds of this. "Let no man deceive you by any means," he says: "for that day shall not come except there come a falling away (apostasy) first, and that man of sin be revealed," whom he describes.

He then adds, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," *i. e.*, the apostasy had already begun, "only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way."

The meaning of this seems to be that there was some power exercised in the earth and over Christendom preventing the full expression of this iniquity, hindering the apostasy from coming to a head.

Whatever this power may have been, it seems still to be working and exercising its restraining influence. Perhaps it is the semblance of Christianity, as represented in the nations of Christendom; perhaps it is the presence of the true Church not yet translated; in any event, it is the Holy Spirit Himself acting in or through these or other agencies.

When he, *i. e.*, this restraining power, shall be removed, "then shall that wicked (or lawless one, the Antichrist) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." In other words, the apostasy will be brought to an end with the destruction of the chief apostate.

#### IV

The modern development of the apostasy dates back to the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, in the rise of the destructive criticism of the Holy Scriptures. When man's faith in the inspiration and authority of the Bible is undermined, the whole structure built upon it must eventually crumble; which explains what we hear now on every hand in the scouting of the deity of Christ, the lost condition of the race, the need of redemption through a sacrificial atonement, eternal retribution of the wicked, and practically all the fundamentals of revealed truth.

And there is a close relation between this and the judgments on the nations synchronizing with the end of the age. Sooner or later, ecclesiastical corruption paves the way for the open revolt of the

kingdoms and nations of the earth "against the Lord and against his Anointed." A writer in the *New York Evening Post* remarks, that "the Bolsheviki are doing more damage to the Central Powers to-day with their ideas than they were ever able to do with their bayonets"—a principle that has a wide application. The United States and the Allies will be able to overcome the artillery and the submarines of Germany, we confidently believe; but the poison gas of her universities, pouring through the theological seminaries of our land, is a more lasting menace.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. How often does the word, "age" occur in the New Testament and how is it commonly translated?
2. Quote some instances of its use.
3. What is Chapell's theory of the object or reason of the ages?
4. What word in Ephesians 1:10 is synonymous with age?
5. What does "dispensation" mean?
6. How many dispensations are spoken of in the Scofield Reference Bible?
7. Name and describe these different dispensations.
8. What eighth dispensation is sometimes named?
9. Describe the manner in which these ages or dispensations passed into one another.
10. Apply the teaching of these historical facts to the coming Millennium.

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- 11. Define the word, "Apostasy" from the negative side.**
- 12. Who is an apostate?**
- 13. State what the "Apostasy" is.**
- 14. How many Scripture references have you examined showing the early rise of the Apostasy in the Church?**
- 15. Expound 2 Thessalonians 2 in your own words.**
- 16. How will the Apostasy be brought to an end?**
- 17. Describe the modern development of the Apostasy.**
- 18. Describe the relation between the Apostasy and the coming judgment on the nations.**

## XVI

### GLOSSARY OF PROPHETIC WORDS

**I**N the previous chapter we began a glossary of the great words of prophetic study, but did not advance very far. The words "age" and "apostasy" were so full of meaning as to fill up the space.

"Antichrist" and "Armageddon" are two other words of importance in the same alphabetic category, but they were treated sufficiently, the first in the chapter entitled "The Antichrist, His History and His Doom," and the second in an earlier work under the title "Prophecy and the Lord's Return" (Revell, N. Y.).

"Beast" is a further word of prophetic importance, which also was defined and explained in the article on the "Antichrist."

"Coming," as applied to the Second Coming of Christ, is next in order. It is a translation of the Greek "parousia," which occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament, and is sometimes rendered "presence" as well as "coming." It means literally "the becoming present." It is the same word that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 16:17, where he speaks of the "coming" to him of Stephanas and others



(see also 2 Cor. 7:6 and Phil. 1:26). Their "coming" was, of course, personal and visible, from which we gather that Christ's coming will be the same. There are other words used in the same connection which have the same significance, like "revelation," 2 Thessalonians 1:7, and "appearing," 1 Timothy 6:14 and other places. (See this worked out more fully in "Prophecy and the Lord's Return.")

"Day" is one of the prophetic words as used in the Biblical phrases "Day of the Lord" (Isa. 10:20; Zeph. 1:7); "Day of Vengeance" (Isa. 61:2); "Day of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:8); "Day of Salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). To speak of them in the order of time, the "day of salvation" is the whole of the present dispensation between the two advents of Christ. The "day of Christ" applies to the blessing and reward of the saints at His second coming (cf., in addition to the text above named, 1 Cor. 5:6; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16). "Day of the Lord" synchronizes with the whole of the millennial age, beginning just prior to it, continuing throughout, and extending somewhat beyond it. It is almost wholly connected with judgment on Israel and the Gentile nations. (See previous chapter on "Day of the Lord—When It Comes and What It Means.") "Day of Vengeance" is practically the same as "Day of the Lord."

"Dispensation" was sufficiently considered in the former chapter under the word "age."

"Gentiles" is a translation of Hebrew and Greek words meaning "nations" and often rendered "heathen." It distinguishes all the nations of the

earth from "Israel," which stands distinctively for God's chosen people in the line of Abraham. The "times of the Gentiles" began when God transferred the dominion of the earth from Israel to the Gentile nations, of which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was the earliest representative; in other words, about B. C. 600 (Jer. 27:1-11; Dan. 2:36-45; 2 Chron. 36:15-21). They will end with the present age and the commencement of the millennial age, when Israel will be in the ascendant as the earthly visualization of the Kingdom of God (see the chapter, "The 'Times of the Gentiles' and the Impending Judgments").

The "fullness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25) is to be distinguished from the "times of the Gentiles" as meaning "the completion of the purpose of God in this age, namely, the outcalling from among the Gentiles of a people for Christ's name, the church which is his body (Acts 15:13-18)." (See the chapter "The Place of the Church in the Plan of Redemption.")

"Gog and Magog" are words first found in Ezekiel 38:2, and are interpreted and applied in our chapter on "What the Bible Teaches About Russia." To this we add the following footnote from the Scofield Reference Bible: "That the primary reference is to the northern (European) powers, headed up by Russia, all agree. Gog is the prince, and Magog his land. The allusion to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk) is a clear mark of identification. . . . The whole prophecy belongs to the yet future Day of the Lord and to the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:14; 19:17), but

includes also the final revolt of the nations at the close of the millennial age (Rev. 20:7-9)." It should be added that the "Gog and Magog" in the last Scripture mentioned does not mean the same nations as those indicated in Ezekiel, as a thousand years intervene between the two, but one would seem to be the prototype of the other.

"Kingdom," "Kingdom of God," "Kingdom of Heaven" were enlarged upon in the chapters, "God's Covenant with David, or the Coming Kingdom," and "How the Kingdom and the Church Differ."

"Remnant" means that which is left of anything, the piece remaining after the last cutting. It is frequently used in Scripture, especially in the Old Testament, but its chief prophetic interest centers in the history of Israel during the tribulation period.

There may be a bad remnant as well as a good one. For the former see 1 Kings 14:10, R. V., Ezekiel 23:25, and similar references; and for the latter Isaiah 1:9; 11:16; Jeremiah 23:3; Zephaniah 2:9; Romans 9:27; Revelation 12:17.

Throughout the whole history of Israel, wicked and disobedient as she was, there was always a faithful "remnant" who remained loyal to the true God. Recall in illustration the story of Elijah's day (1 Kings 19:18); also Daniel and the three worthies of whom the sacred record speaks in Daniel 1 and 3, and "them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" in Christ's time (Luke 2:38). Note particularly that there is such a remnant now, "a remnant according to the election of grace," *i. e.*, in this church age, as indicated in Romans 11:4, 5.

But the "remnant" in the great day of trial that is to come will be composed of those Jews who will turn to the Lord and accept Jesus as their Messiah after the translation of the Church. Zechariah 13:9 refers to these, and they are brought before us again symbolically in Revelation 6:9-11; 7:4-8; 12:17; 20:4, and other places.

These passages show that some of the "remnant" will undergo martyrdom in that period and be raised and reign with Christ and His Church, while others will be spared through the tribulation and enter into the earthly blessings of the millennium. Their experiences during the tribulation are set before us prophetically in the millennial psalms, and furnish one of the most thrilling chapters of revealed history (see Ps. 9:9-14).

"Restitution" is used but once in a prophetic sense, namely, in Acts 3:21, where Peter, speaking of the ascended Christ, says: "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution (restoration R. V.) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Some suppose this to refer to the salvation and restoration of the wicked dead and even of Satan himself, but their mistake is seen in the fact that Peter's words are limited by what the prophets have spoken. The context shows that he means what they have spoken concerning Israel, for he is addressing himself to Jews only. That which they have spoken relates to Israel's restoration to her land and the setting up of the kingdom of David (see

Gen. 12:2, 3; Deut. 30:1-9; 2 Sam. 7:8-17; Rom. 11:26, etc.).

“Tribulation” is a word full of saddest meaning prophetically. Of course, ever since sin entered the world there has been tribulation with it, and it is even said of us Christians that “we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). But the tribulation of which the prophets speak is an event coincident with the end period of this age. By the “end period” is meant the last years of the age, or, in prophetic terms, the last week of Daniel’s seventy weeks, especially the latter half of that week (Dan. 9:24-27).

It is the time of Antichrist’s supremacy, the time of the judgments described in Revelation 16, the time of Armageddon. But although all the nations of the earth must in some measure be involved in it, yet it is peculiarly “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7).

A mooted question among students of prophecy is whether the Church—i. e., the true Church—will pass through the tribulation, some affirming that it will and others that it will not. The writer believes with the latter that the Church will be translated before that period, and he thinks a strong Biblical argument can be presented for it. Nevertheless, while the question is important, it is not so vital as to justify any division among brethren in regard to it.

“Weeks” obtains its prominence as a prophetic word from its place in Daniel 9, referred to above. The prophet had asked God to reveal to him the time

of the deliverance of His people Israel from their Babylonian captivity, and God had sent His angel to say, "seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city." "Weeks" is a translation of a Hebrew word meaning "sevens," and what God really said was, "seventy sevens are determined," without stating whether they were seventy sevens of days, weeks, months, or years. The context, however, shows that He meant years—seventy sevens of years, or four hundred and ninety years.

This period is divided again into three. There are first seven sevens, or forty-nine years, extending to the reestablishment of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity; sixty-two sevens, or four hundred and thirty-four years, down to the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and one seven, or the last seven years of this age. The intervening time from the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews among the nations until their return again to their land at the end period, is not included in the four hundred and ninety. This is in accordance with a principle in God's dealing with that people not to count time in their history while they are sojourning in captivity to the Gentiles.

"Zion." This word is named in this list chiefly to say that it is never applied in Scripture to the Church. Much confusion of thought and misinterpretation of the prophetic Scriptures have been caused by the failure to recognize this fact. For one thing, it has caused all the Old Testament

promises to be applied to the Church and all the curses to Israel. It accounts, too, for the mischievous principle of spiritualizing Scriptures that ought to be taken literally, and which makes the Bible to many a book so "hard to be understood."

"Zion" is the translation of the Hebrew word for "castle." In Deuteronomy 4:48, it is given to the peak of Mount Hermon. Later, it is applied to the eminence in Jerusalem where David established his throne. Sometimes the whole city of Jerusalem is called Zion, and once the word is used symbolically of heaven (Heb. 12:22), but it is never applied to the Church.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What Greek words are translated by "coming"?
2. How often does it occur in the New Testament, and how is it otherwise rendered?
3. What is its literal meaning?
4. What other words in the New Testament have the same significance?
5. State the distinctions among the four uses of the word, "Day."
6. State the distinction between the "fullness of the Gentiles" and "the times of the Gentiles."
7. Where are the names "Gog and Magog" found in the Old Testament?
8. To what nation are they thought to refer?
9. How would you distinguish between the reference to them in Ezekiel and that in Revelation?

10. Have you examined the Scripture references to the word, "Remnant" ?
11. Who will constitute the "Remnant" in the Tribulation?
12. Have you read Psalm 9?
13. How is the word "Restitution" to be applied in Acts 3:21?
14. What does this chapter teach about "Tribulation" ?
15. What does this chapter teach about the word "Weeks" as found in Daniel 9?
16. What misunderstanding exists as to the application of the word, "Zion" ?
17. What serious error has it caused?



## XVII

### THE END OF THE AGE AND HOW TO MEET IT

#### I

**T**HE theme of this chapter has been chosen in order to bring the teaching up to this point to a spiritual and practical conclusion.

It is a brief exposition of Paul's words to Timothy—those in the third and fourth chapters of the second letter to his young son in the faith, beginning with the words: "This know also that in the last days perilous (grievous) times shall come." By "the last days," I do not understand him to mean those preceding the end of the world, which, as we have seen, is doubtless a long way off, but those preceding the end of the age, which, for aught we know, may be very near.

Indeed his description of these days so tallies with what we see around us now, as almost to compel the conclusion that he has the present time in mind. For is not this time marked by selfishness, by the love of money, boasting, pride, blasphemy, disobedience to parents, unthankfulness, the absence of natural affection, the breaking of treaties, slander, incontinence, fierceness and the other awful things he names? Does not the love of pleasure supersede

the love of God to-day, and has not formalism largely taken the place of real spiritual power in the religious life?

Of course, it may be said that these things have been apparent in every period of the professing Church from apostolic days till now. Cowper thought they marked his period over 100 years ago, when he wrote:

“The Prophets speak of such, and, noting down  
The features of the last degenerate times,  
Exhibit every lincament of these.”

But this does not effect the prediction that they will mark the last days, nor the fact that they assuredly mark the present ones.

## II

Therefore particular interest attaches to the three or four additional things which Paul says about these days:

(1) *He speaks of the influence of the formalists on the female mind.* “Of this sort are they that creep into houses and lead captive silly women.”

Not that all women are silly, as some of Paul's critics might be quick to charge him as having said, but that those are silly who are led away by these false teachers whose propaganda he informs us is marked by secretiveness, cowardice and ignorance.

We think of Bahaism in these days, and the Star of the East, and New Thought, and Christian Science, and Spiritualism, and other forms of Theosophy and Buddhism, which get their foothold in these western

climes so generally through woman's susceptibility. When her conscience is restless because of sin and fear, and failing to accept Jesus Christ as her Saviour and Lord she "casts wearily about for other anodynes," the false teacher gets his opportunity. He has his occult solutions of her difficulties, and she listens, and experiments and becomes infatuated and is lost.

(2) A second thing he mentions is that these "*evil men and seducers*" (or impostors), for thus he characterizes false teachers of religion, "*shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*"

A prediction this is which definitely answers the ever-recurring question as to whether the world is morally growing better or worse.

The modern view is that improvement is constantly in progress, but the Bible steadfastly teaches the opposite. And it does so because it is dealing with fundamental and eternal principles rather than material phenomena of any kind. These latter can be good and lasting only as they express or are based upon the right view of and the right relationship to God, which are clearly inconsistent with the growth of religious imposture in the world.

Note further, that these impostors are not only deceiving others, but are themselves deceived. The god of this age, as Satan is called in the Bible, is he who controls their thinking and inspires their religious zeal though they are unaware of it. Because they refuse the love of the truth God gives them over to a delusion that they should believe the lie (2 Thess. 2: 10, 11).

(3) A third thing is *the certainty of persecution for all who oppose the world's view of things*, or as the apostle puts it, "for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus."

"Antithetical principles must collide, and collision for the Christian disciple must bring pain." This may not mean the faggot, or imprisonment or the lictor's thong, in these days, though in some places and under some conditions these are not impossible; but it will mean ostracism and contempt, it will mean defection of relatives and friends, and it will mean an opposition on the part of those who have the power of worldly preferment that will bring deprivation and loss that can be felt.

(4) But a fourth thing Paul mentions *has joy and comfort in it*.

These false teachers shall come to an end, or as his words in 3:9 might be rendered, "they shall not proceed too far." The hounds of hell are leashed. He compares the teachers with the magicians who withstood Moses before Pharaoh, and he affirms that their folly shall be made evident to all men as was true in the other case. But that will be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, the day of the Lord's coming for which the whole creation groans.

### III

We have thus before us a picture of the last days, however sketchy, and it is in order now to follow Paul as, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he instructs and warns us how to face the situation it

discloses, and how to solve its problems. Three lines of action are set forth:

(1) After describing the character of the men and women who are in part the cause, and in part the product of the times, and after climaxing his description on the religionists who hold only the outward form of godliness and deny the power thereof, he says: "*From such turn away*" (3:5). There must be no compromise in other words, and no parley; separation must be the rule.

Devoutly is it to be wished that the youth of our generation would act on this advice or rather command, and "turn away" from these false systems of religion before attempting to investigate them. To investigate them is worse than useless for there is always peril in it. And this investigation has been done for us by those competent for the task, and who have stamped their character upon them in no unmistakable terms.

The fabric of these false systems is not new, though like an old dress they sometimes deceive us by taking on new collars and cuffs. Their beginnings were in Babylon, on the plain of Shinar, of which we have written in a preceding chapter, and which the Bible calls "the mother of the harlots and the abominations of the earth" (Rev. 17:5). From her face flight is the only safety for "her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell" (Prov. 5:5).

(2) But flight is nothing if there be no refuge to fly to, and therefore Paul reveals one in the Word of God. "*Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of,*" he says to

Timothy, "*knowing of whom thou hast learned them*" (3:14).

The things he had learned and had been assured of were those of Holy Scripture, and he had learned them from his mother and his grandmother as we are informed in the first epistle. Therefore he is exhorted to continue, or abide, in his nursery faith.

Bishop Moule's commentary reminds us of the vividness of that word, "continue." Timothy is not merely to hold these things as opinions, they are not to be merely a thin thread of sentiment in his mental make-up, "a languid conservation of what has become habitual," but to be grasped as a living force. He is to stay in the things he has believed, to find his home there and to be always at home. The truths concerning God, Christ, sin, redemption, faith, holiness, and the return of our Lord are to be his inner circle, his atmosphere, nearer than anything else to him. He is to be fused with them so that they and he shall be one reality.

But why that reference to salvation in the verse? "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee *wise unto salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Was not Timothy already saved? Assuredly, so far as deliverance from condemnation was concerned. But salvation is not only a thing of the past but something also which is going on. Timothy needed what every true Christian needs, a salvation from the spirit and the power of the times in which he lives. A daily salvation from the love of self, the love of money, pride, boastfulness, blasphemy, in-

gratitude, slander, incontinence, fierceness, treason, the inordinate love of pleasure, and fundamentally from that unspiritual Christianity which is the form of godliness without its power. He needs a salvation which enables him to overcome the world every day, and that salvation becomes his instrumentally through the Word of God.

That Paul means something like this is clear from the next verse where he says: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (R. V.).

These are the times, therefore, to get back to the Bible by many so long neglected. To-day, we need right teaching, we need the reproof of authority, we need the correction that springs from wisdom and love, and we need that instruction in righteousness which rounds out the Christian profession in the kind of service that honours God.

(3) But to "continue" in the faith is not enough save as an effort is made to reach others who are not of the faith. And so, in the succeeding chapter Paul says: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, *preach the Word; be instant, in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.*"

The solemnity of this charge startles us. It is the strongest adjuration that could be addressed to

mortal. The Lord Jesus is coming again to set up His Kingdom, and before Him His Saints must appear "that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). In that day Timothy, and every saint, according to his opportunity, will be held responsible for his ministry of the Word of God.

Preaching the word is not sermonizing. It is not the work of the ordained ministry only. In the early days, "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad . . . except the apostles. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1-4). Just common, every-day men, women and children these were, who went everywhere telling out the story of salvation through the cross.

This is the paramount duty of the Christian in these days, not to disseminate his opinions about religion or the times, but to preach the Word. "In season, out of season," characterizes it as a fireside task; the task of the social circle; the task of the store and the shop, the camp and the market-place.

Women, meeting together in Red Cross work, company the clinking of your scissors and your knitting needles with the preaching of the Word! "Do your bit" to create an atmosphere for God, a chance for His voice to be heard in the midst of the world's Babel. To do this you will need the grace of "long-suffering" of which Paul speaks, for surely these are the times when "they will not endure the sound



doctrine; but having itching ears, shall heap unto themselves teachers after their own lusts."

"Itching ears." The Athenians "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21), and so would it appear of these whom Paul has in mind.

"Heaping to themselves teachers." What a contrast to the picture in Ephesians 4, where we are taught that when Christ ascended on high, leading captivity captive, He gave gifts unto men. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and *teachers*." But these are not of that sort. "Uncommissioned propagandists" are these whom the people are heaping to themselves. How graphic a description of the multiplicity of religious teachers!

"Heaping," however, not only suggests numbers, but lack of discrimination and confusion. What a medley of teachers of religion we have! And a medley, because they are teaching not what God has revealed but what the people want. "After their own lusts." And thus are they turning their ears from the truth and being turned unto fables.

#### IV

There is strong encouragement to act on Paul's instruction and advice. He is himself ready to be offered and the time of his departure is at hand. He has fought the good fight, he has finished the course, he has kept the faith. He has done that which he is urging Timothy, and you and me to do. And now, he says,

"Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

God help each one of us to make full proof of our ministry, for the Judge standeth at the door.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Have you read 2 Timothy 3-4?
2. What are we to understand by "the last days"?
3. How does Paul's description of "the last days" compare with our own days?
4. Name the four additional things which Paul says about these days.
5. What false teachings of the present day are getting a foothold through woman's susceptibility?
6. How does the Bible answer the question as to whether the world is morally growing better or worse?
7. Have you read 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11?
8. For what must the true witness to God and to His Son be prepared in these days?
9. When will this persecution end?
10. What three lines of action does Paul recommend in the face of this situation?
11. Why should youth shun these false teachings?
12. What does the word "continue" mean in this case?
13. What daily salvation does the Christian need?

- 14. What instrumental means has God provided to this end?**
- 15. What is the Christian's duty to those about him?**
- 16. What is meant by "preaching" in this case?**
- 17. What definition of false religious teachers does this lesson give?**
- 18. What encouragement is there for the faithful servant of Christ?**

## XVIII

### WHY GERMANY CANNOT RULE THE WORLD

(Note: This chapter and those that follow, with exception of the last perhaps, are not intrinsically related to the foregoing, although they were published as articles in the *Christian Herald* at about the same time, having been called forth by special circumstances. As their contents have more than a passing interest, however, it has been thought desirable to add them to this volume.)

#### I

**F**OR nearly one hundred years there lived in England a Bible teacher, seer and student of prophecy, named Benjamin Wills Newton. He died just prior to the present war at the ripe age of ninety. In 1855, during the progress of the Crimean War, he published a tractate to show, from the Scriptures, that the struggle between the Western Powers and Russia must result in the triumph of the former—a prophecy he saw fulfilled.

The German Empire was not then in evidence, and indeed, the name of Germany is mentioned only once in the tractate; but if it were now rewritten, and "Germany" substituted for "Russia" throughout its pages, few other changes would be needed to make it fit as perfectly into present conditions as it did into those of sixty odd years ago.

In other words, the reason, fundamentally, why

Russia could not control the world then, is the reason why Germany cannot control it now. The present chapter, though original in that its author is alone responsible for it, is nevertheless, in essence, the re-writing, though in much abridgment, of Mr. Newton's work.

## II

Europe for a long while has been minus a controlling center, a balance of power. Prior to the present period, the will of Great Britain and France, unitedly expressed, was determinative of most European questions. But when the strength of France was impaired—as at the time of the Franco-Prussian war—no such controlling force remained.

Gradually, however, France has been regaining her former position with England, and at the bottom of the present war is Germany's purpose to offset the results certain to follow in that case. But she cannot finally and permanently achieve her aim, not because she lacks the force, nor the organization, nor the advantage of temporary success, but because a higher Power than she or any other nation has decreed otherwise.

## III

It is the Divine prophecy recorded in Daniel 2 that enables one to speak thus confidently. It was given him of God at a time when controlling power was being withdrawn from his nation of Israel and committed by God to certain nations of the Gentiles. This power had been given to Israel away back in

the days of Solomon, the son of David, but because of her transgressions it was now being transferred for the time being.

This transfer, be it noted, was not to the other nations of the world indiscriminately, not to others who through their own strength might be able to grasp and retain it, but to certain and particular nations which God Himself indicated and to which He gave, and would continue to give, the power to execute His will.

These nations were symbolized in the colossal metal image seen in a dream by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and which Daniel the prophet was enlightened and empowered to interpret.

Scripture itself identifies the nations that are meant—or rather empires, as we now call them—as being in succession, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. For the supreme power of the first, compare Daniel 2:37, the second, Ezra 1:2, the third, Daniel 11:3, and the fourth, Luke 2:1.

Quoting Newton: "The sovereign controlling power of earth which was first vested in Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, next in Cyrus of Persia, afterwards in Alexander of Greece, descended at last to the emperors of Rome; and within the territory once ruled by them, that sovereign power resides, and there its home will be until the Gentile Image comes to an end and forgiven Jerusalem becomes the 'City of the Great King.' "

By the "Gentile Image," he means that image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, and the interpretation of which afforded the occasion of

Daniel's prophecy. By "forgiven Jerusalem," he means the ancient city of Palestine, restored to Israel and occupied by her when she shall at length have become reconciled to God through the acceptance of the crucified Jesus as her Messiah.

"Accordingly," he goes on to say, "during all the rude shocks which the Roman Empire has received, the supreme determining power of earth has never left its boundary. Invading tribes have never succeeded in removing the seat of power outside its limits. Such tribes have either lost the authority they temporarily possessed, or else, in order to retain it, they have abandoned their primeval seats and sought a new home within the divinely prescribed area." This the Turks did when they left their primeval seats for Constantinople."

We may be pardoned a digression here to say that, while some Biblical scholars question the application of the fourth empire to Rome, nevertheless such has been the orthodox application from the beginning. It was early expressed by Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities*, by a majority of the church fathers, by all the expositors of the Middle Ages, and by a majority of the moderns. Among these last some of the best known are Lange, Hengstenberg, Haver-nick, Hofmann, Keil, Gaussen, Auberlen, Kliefoth, Pusey, Barnes, Faussett and Tregelles.

The great Joseph Mede, an English theologian of the seventeenth century, first of his countrymen to attempt an explanation of the book of Revelation, places the application of the fourth empire to Rome as among the axioms of prophetic interpretation.

“Having so good ground in Scripture,” he says, “it is with me little less than an article of faith.”

#### IV

Now the point is that Germany, if we except the southwestern corner of her land, was not represented in Nebuchadnezzar’s image; in other words, she never became a part of the Roman Empire. Hence the impossibility that she should be finally and permanently victorious over those nations which are so represented.

That is not to say that she may not for a time be permitted, as a scourge, to successfully assail them, or even temporarily to occupy or control a portion of their territory as at the present moment; but this is something different from becoming the mistress of those nations, and holding through them the determinative power of the earth.

There may be a long and difficult conflict still ahead, for the progress of events in the Divine calendar is sometimes hindered by things beyond our ken; but so far as the end is concerned, we can say with the inspired prophet, “The dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure” (Dan. 2:45).

Speaking of the “things beyond our ken” recalls the mysterious tenth chapter of Daniel, where it is revealed that centuries ago, when, in the providence of God, the time had come for the Persian Empire to succeed the Babylonian in the place of power, the angel of God was sent to confirm and strengthen Persia, but was resisted and hindered by the powers



of darkness for the space of twenty-one days. The representative of the powers of darkness in this case was called "the prince of the kingdom of Persia."

It is true, in other words, that not only in an individual sense, but nationally as well, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood (merely), but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). These "heavenly places" are not those of which we conceive as the dwelling-place of the unveiled presence of God, of His holy angels, and the "spirits of just men made perfect," but those which for the time being are possessed by the evil angels and Satan who is at their head.

In the crisis of the Persian succession, Michael the chief prince, or the archangel, as we are told, came to help the angel of God against the spiritual "prince of the kingdom of Persia," and success followed; or, as the angel of God Himself said to Daniel, "I remained there with the kings of Persia" (Dan. 10:13).

There is an intimation in the same chapter that a similar spiritual conflict ensued in the region of the heavens when, later, the succession was about to pass from the Persian to the Grecian Empire; for Satan does not purpose that God shall have His way if he can prevent it. Little do we know, therefore, the seriousness of the warfare now raging in the "heavenly places" as well as on the battle-fields of France.

Mr. Newton reminds us that just before the Roman

Empire was established as the mistress of the world, it had to pass through one of its most severe and dangerous struggles with an earthly prince to whom the Kaiser may well be compared. Mithridates was his name, and his influence extended along the coast of the Black Sea to the Caspian. The prize contended for was Asia Minor and the East, the same as it is to-day. A terrible warfare was conducted, but he was overcome. And now, if the moment has arrived, as symbolized in the Gentile Image, when the limits of the Roman Empire are again to appear, may we not expect another struggle not unlike the first?

The effectual revival of the East, and the recognized reappearance of the Roman nations there as well as in the West, would be a supreme step onward in the development of the Divine counsels, and we might well expect a tremendous political convulsion to precede it.

## V

Another interesting point is this: that the Roman Empire and its predecessors in the Image have their historic existence in Scripture as long as they are employed in that which concerns Israel in Jerusalem. One of the objects for which they were called into power was that they might punish and "tread down" the Holy City. Therefore, as soon as Israel was dispersed after the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, A. D. 70, a long night began to fall on the Roman Empire, although the "iron" strength which was its heritage always remained somewhere within its boundaries.

For this reason we may believe that when the Jews again return to Jerusalem in unbelief to re-establish their Holy City—and are not events pointing that way just now?—we shall once more behold the Roman nations in the divided form of the ten tribes of the Image, assuming a definite relation to it and to its people. Is it then unlikely, in view of all this, that the Roman nations now engaged against Germany shall successfully resist her?

It is recorded of John Bright that, when he was once tempted to turn back in his great reform movements, he said: "If we can't win as fast as we wish, we know that our opponents can't, in the long run, win at all." Then he gathered new courage and went on to victory. "Let us in our conflict," says another, "look up, cheer up, and go forward. Doing this, as surely as Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth, we shall finally and gloriously triumph."

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Who was Benjamin Wills Newton?
2. What work of his is referred to?
3. What parallel is drawn between the European political situation of that day and this?
4. What is given as the explanation of Germany's present purpose?
5. Why can she not succeed?
6. What Scripture indicates this?
7. Give the gist of that prophecy.

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8. Have you examined the references which identify the controlling empires?
9. How has history fulfilled this prophecy?
10. Name some modern authorities who corroborate the application of the fourth empire to Rome.
11. Why cannot Germany become finally and permanently victorious over the nations thus represented?
12. Give an Old Testament application of Ephesians 6:12.
13. What is the meaning of "heavenly places" in this case?
14. Relate in your own words the story of Mithridates, and apply it to the present war.
15. State the relation of the Roman Empire to Israel in Jerusalem.
16. What inference of present importance may be drawn from this?
17. Quote the encouraging remark of John Bright.

## XIX

### PROPHECY CHANGING THE MAP OF EUROPE

#### I

**T**HE previous chapter dealt with the question, "Why Germany Cannot Rule the World," the evidence and the argument for which was drawn from the prophecy in the second chapter of Daniel.

Briefly summarized, we saw that during "the times of the Gentiles" God has committed the control of the world into the hands of particular nations, of which Germany is not one.

"The times of the Gentiles" commenced at about 600 B. C., and will continue until the second coming of Christ to set up His kingdom in the earth. The year 600 B. C. was the time when, in punishment for her transgressions, God withdrew the power to govern from Israel, to be restored again to her through purifying judgments, when Christ comes.

The particular nations to which the government of the earth was committed were represented in the colossal image of the man which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, saw in a dream, and which the divinely inspired prophet interpreted for him and for us. They were, in their order, the kingdom of

Babylon, and the empires of Persia, Greece and Rome. We quoted Benjamin Wills Newton to the effect that "the sovereign controlling power of earth which was first vested in Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, next in Cyrus of Persia, afterwards in Alexander of Greece, descended at last to the emperors of Rome; and within the territory once ruled by them that sovereign power resides, and there its home will be until the Gentile Image comes to an end and forgiven Jerusalem becomes "the city of the great King."

Now the point is, as we then said, that Germany, except the southwestern corner of her land, was not represented in that image; in other words, she never became a part of the Roman Empire in the Scriptural significance of that term, and hence the improbability, if not impossibility, that she should be finally and permanently victorious over those nations which are so represented.

## II

It remains to prove this by indicating the countries that fell within the Roman Empire; and this in turn raises the question as to what period of the Roman Empire is in mind?

This question is met by the consideration that "prophecy relating to Gentile dominion is always focused upon the Jews and Palestine, and has especially in view the presence of the nation in her own land." Now, it is well known that shortly after the overthrow of the Jews by the Romans A. D. 70, their national recognition as possessors of the land ceased,

a period which broadly corresponds to the close of the apostolic era.

This is approximately Trajan's period (56-117 A. D.), under whom the empire extended its boundaries to the farthest limit on the east. The dying Augustus hoped it might never be extended beyond the Euphrates, but Trajan's ambition led to a victorious conflict with the Parthians by which there were permanently added to his territory, Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia.

Defining the nations in detail, therefore, (1) those in the northwest included Great Britain, that is to say, England and Scotland as far north as the Grampian Hills. Ireland was never brought under the Roman power, which may explain some things in her history in all the years.

(2) As to the west, Gibbon is authority for the statement that the old Roman wall left the Rhine near Bingen and joined the Danube near Ratisbon. The Romans possessed everything west of this, including Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and, as stated above, the southwest corner of Germany, the lobe of the ear, so to speak, which includes Luxemburg, Baden and Bavaria south of the Danube, as well as the much-disputed and contested region of Alsace and Lorraine, which will be referred to again.

(3) In the south and southeast, the Romans possessed Italy, Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, and the Archipelago and all the territory south of the Danube. This last includes what we know as European Turkey, Bulgaria, Servia, Mon-

tenegro, and all the Austrian dominions south and west of the Danube. To this Trajan added the province of Dacia north of the Danube and to the east of Hungary, or what we know as Rumania. The central part of Hungary was never brought within the Roman Empire.

(4) In Asia the Black Sea was the northern boundary, which thence extended along a southeasterly line to the Persian Gulf, taking in Asiatic Turkey, the Bible names for which are Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine, and, as mentioned above, Armenia.

(5) In Africa Rome possessed a portion of Egypt and the northern coast, identified by moderns as Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria and the upper part of Morocco.

To quote Newton again, "these are the countries which fall within the boundaries of the Gentile Image, and which, from the earliest period until now, have ever been the center of all that has influenced human life. The light of revelation first given to Israel, and then to the Christian Church, was set within these countries. All the civilization of antiquity was centered there, where still resides the power which at this moment is forming the character of the world. The responsibilities of these nations are unequalled."

### III

Let us now consider what realignment of the nations may be necessary in order to the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy that those of the Roman Em-



pire are to resume their distinctness and corporate relation to each other at the end of the age.

1. It is obvious that all those countries external to the Roman limits that now exercise authority over countries within those limits will be obliged to relinquish such authority. Newton illustrates this by the case of Belgium and Holland. The former at one time was subjected to the latter, but the latter was obliged to relinquish this authority. Political reasons made it necessary, of course, but there was a divine reason back of these, namely, that Belgium was part of the Gentile Image and Holland was not. Belgium was originally in the Roman Empire, but Holland never was.

This need not carry with it, however, the corollary that countries now or hereafter to be connected with or allied to the nations of the Roman Empire, and which were not so connected or allied at the time mentioned, are necessarily to be given up. For example, Great Britain need not be required to lop off the Scottish highlands, nor even to lose Ireland.

2. On the other hand, we may expect Germany to be deprived of her possessions west of the Rhine and south of the Danube. In other words, if Gibbon is to be relied upon as to the Roman wall, this means the loss of Luxemburg and Baden, and part of Bavaria, and Alsace and Lorraine.

3. By the same token there must be a radical break in the Austro-Hungarian empire, for, as Gibbon says, "If we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary between the Theiss and the Danube, all the dominions of the house of

Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman Empire." We need not be surprised, therefore, if Hungary becomes divorced from Austria, and the latter severs her alliance with the German Empire. And when that division comes, if not before, we may expect Italy to retrieve all the territory that rightly belongs to her.

4. As to the nations farther south and east, there can be little doubt that Bulgaria will withdraw her loyalty from Germany, and that Rumania will be enabled to break the chains now binding her to the same empire on the one hand and to Russia on the other.

5. Palestine will not return to the Turk, and Armenia at last will be delivered from the awful bondage of the same tyrant.

#### IV

We had pursued our study of the map to this point, when there was freshly brought to our attention a recent volume, "The Roman Empire in Prophecy," by W. E. Vine, M. A., an English Bible student, collaborator with Dr. Hogg in a valuable commentary on Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians. His work on the Roman Empire was the outcome of conversations with inquirers since the outbreak of the present war, in which he drew upon the study he had given to the subject for over twenty years.

He raises the question as to whether Germany is to be considered a part of the Roman Empire because of the conquest and rule of Charlemagne in the eighth century, but apparently dismisses it in favour

of the principle of interpretation spoken of above; namely, that within the meaning of the prophecy, the Roman Empire stands for its limits at the close of the first century of the Christian era.

With this principle in mind, he notices "certain circumstances of past and present history suggestive of future issues," from which, even at the risk of some repetition, it is interesting to quote, because of its corroboration of the above:

1. Commencing with north Africa, the author observes that practically the same strip of territory which belonged to the Roman Empire in the times of the apostles has passed directly under the government of countries which were themselves then within the empire; and no country then outside of the empire has been permitted to annex that territory since the Saracens and Turks were dispossessed of it.

2. Passing to Asia, the present war has already dispossessed Turkey of Mesopotamia, and most of Armenia and Palestine, and brought them under the control of Great Britain, a country of the Roman Empire.

3. As to Greece, it obtained its ancient province of Macedonia as an outcome of the Balkan War of 1912, and to-day its boundaries are approximately what they were in the Roman Empire.

4. The dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary was partly within and partly without the Roman Empire. What are now Hungary, Transylvania, and Bessarabia were without, while Pannonia or Austria west of the Danube was within. Even when, in a later century Dacia (now Transylvania, Bessarabia, etc.)

was annexed, the two parts of the present dual kingdom were separate. And we all know, as Mr. Vine says, that "the separation of the two parts has been a practical question of European politics for some time, and may be hastened by present events."

5. "The northern and northeastern boundaries of Italy embraced the Trentino and the peninsula of Istria. Noticeable, therefore, are the present efforts of Italy to acquire these very districts, efforts which are likely to achieve success.

6. "Roman states north of Italy covered what are now Baden, Würtemberg, Luxemburg and a large part of Bavaria, the possibility of an eventual severance of which from Prussian domination has been much discussed of late.

7. "The Rhenish provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, originally part of the Roman province of Gallia (now France) were snatched from that country by Germany in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Their recovery is a supreme object of the efforts of the French in the present war."

Our author speaks in an equally interesting manner of England and her colonies, and also of the United States, should the latter continue in alliance with her, but space will not permit further attention to the subject at this time. He would be understood as speaking not dogmatically, however, but by way of suggestion only, and yet that the Scripture will be absolutely fulfilled he has no doubt, though the exact mode of its accomplishment is known only to God.

## QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Summarize the previous lesson.
2. What was the point of the previous lesson to be proved in the present one?
3. What period of the Roman Empire is in mind?
4. Name the nations of the Roman Empire in Europe, Asia and Africa.
5. What makes for their great responsibility?
6. What is obvious as to certain countries external to the Roman Empire?
7. What division of German territory is likely to take place?
8. What is likely to happen in the Austrian empire?
9. What about the Balkans and Palestine?
10. What authority is quoted in this lesson in addition to Mr. Newton?
11. What does he say about North Africa?
12. About Asia and Greece?
13. About Austria-Hungary and Italy?
14. About Germany and France?

## XX

### IS THE KAISER THE ANTICHRIST?

#### I

**A**MONG the many questions in the realm of prophecy which have arisen during the war, one of the most persistent has been, "Is the Kaiser the Antichrist?" which we consider in this chapter.

Two or three months ago occasion was had to correspond with several Bible teachers who are authorities in prophetic study, when the question of the Kaiser's being the Antichrist was taken up. The letters were so interesting and informing that permission was obtained to publish some of them.

#### I

The first is from the Rev. I. M. Haldeman, D. D., pastor of the First Baptist Church, Seventy-ninth Street and Broadway, New York City, who writes:

"There are many things in the career, attitude and speech of the Kaiser, together with his victorious march to the East, which suggest the Antichrist. Should he succeed as he is now endeavouring to do in raising an army of a million or two of Asiatics; should he take possession of Persia, Armenia and the Euphratean valley; set up a kingdom from Bagdad

to Babylon; assume the titles of the Chaldean, the Assyrian and king of Babylon; win Jerusalem from the English and then announce himself protector of the Jews; declare the restoration of the Holy Roman Empire or the Germano-Roman Empire as he has promised to do, with greater extension and glory than it ever knew, he would almost line for line be fulfilling the portrait of the Wicked One.

"But we must measure final things by the image. The image has a twofold process of fulfillment; from the head to the feet—from the feet to the head. So far it has been going down from the head to the feet. We are undoubtedly in the region or the beginning of the region of the clay. The Antichrist can come only when the prophecy starts backward or upward from the feet to the head. As the clay is the basic element (and that is the people), then the iron (the autocratic) element can come in only after the clay has come to the front.

"The federation of ten kings comes not from war as such, nor as the result of a conqueror's victory, but by and from the people, who must produce the democratic kings. The last Kaiser can become such only after five democratic kings come in the region of the Western Empire and five in the Eastern (starting from the Adriatic line and below the Danube).

"The initial act of the Antichrist which throws him forward to Europe is the overthrow of three democratic and eastern systems. He becomes the wild beast of whom the question is asked, 'Who is able to make war with him?' only after he has be-

come the head of the image. Then the question must further arise: 'Against whom does he make war?' Evidently not against his own ten kings. This being so would eliminate him as a personal or possible factor in this war, and necessarily free the present Kaiser from identification with him.

"Bacon says prophecy has a budding, a blossoming and a fulfilling. I am assured we are largely in the blossoming, and every day's event gives emphasis to the fulfillment of prophecy and the verification of the written Word, but the Kaiser is not the Antichrist."

Some of our readers may welcome a few words of explanation of the above.

Dr. Haldeman's reference to the "image" means that which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, saw in his dream as recorded and interpreted in Daniel 2. It revealed the whole course of Gentile history in the world from that day till the end of this age. The ten toes of the image are having their historical fulfillment now, in Dr. Haldeman's judgment. They were composed part of iron and part of clay, the latter representing democracy, the former autocracy. Democracy is coming into the ascendant at the present time, but there will be a reaction, as he understands the prophecy, and from the people themselves will arise the autocratic despot, the Antichrist. This will not be, however, until the ten "democratic kings," or kingdoms, are clearly defined, and divided evenly between the eastern and western halves of the old



Roman Empire. When the Antichrist arises, his appearance will be coincident with his overthrow of three of the eastern kingdoms, after which the growth of his power will be rapid until he is at the head of the ten, the head of the image and the successor of Nebuchadnezzar. He then goes forth to "make war"; but as it is obvious that he does not make war against his own under kings, or his own kingdoms, he cannot be the Kaiser, because the latter is at present making war against some or most of those very kingdoms at whose head the Antichrist shall be.

This, as Dr. Haldeman says, does "necessarily free the present Kaiser from identification with him."

## II

We follow Dr. Haldeman's communication with that of Dr. C. I. Scofield, because he also stresses the point that the political despot we have in mind comes out from among the people, the democracy. Dr. Scofield, unlike Dr. Haldeman, and some others, distinguishes between the "Beast" of Revelation 13 and the Antichrist. The "Beast," in his opinion, is the political despot, and the Antichrist the false prophet associated with him in that chapter. For our purpose, however, this distinction need not be pressed, as we are talking about the political despot himself, the wicked head of the Gentile powers at the end of the age, whether he be called for the present "Beast" or the "Antichrist."

Of him Dr. Scofield says: "The one unanswerable objection to the Kaiser-Beast theory is that the

'Beast' rises 'out of the sea,' i. e., the mere mass of men. Napoleon Bonaparte might well be taken as an adumbration. The Kaiser comes of a race of rulers, and is by no means merged in the mass of mankind.

"Another collateral argument rests upon the man of one kingdom overcoming two, over which he reigns, and then over the federated restored empire. The whole setting is of the East, and not of northern Europe.

"Moreover, the final scene brings against him in his place 'in the glorious holy mountain' powers from the North and South. If the 'Beast' is the Kaiser, his own power is in the North; therefore I do not believe the Kaiser-Beast theory."

### III

Mr. A. C. Gaebelien, editor of *Our Hope*, is the next authority. He is the author of many Bible commentaries, that on Daniel probably being the best known. Like Dr. Scofield, he says: "It is very necessary to distinguish between the two leaders of the end of the age, who head the apostate forces after the true Church has been caught away. The one is the head of the reconstructed Roman Empire seen by Daniel as the little horn among the ten horns (7) and as the prince in the ninth chapter; the other is the personal Antichrist, whose picture is given in the eleventh chapter. The one is the political masterpiece of Satan and the other the ecclesiastical head.

"The head of the Roman Empire (the political

masterpiece) must appear first, but he cannot appear till that empire is formed. The final Antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son, who does away with all Christian doctrine and opposeth and exalteth himself, etc., cannot come till the apostasy is here. The apostasy in turn cannot come as long as the true Church is in earth.

“To restate: The emperor over the Roman Empire will not appear till that empire is formed. The personal Antichrist will be manifested when the apostasy has come. Inasmuch, then, as we have no Roman Empire revived and the apostasy is not here, and above all, the true Church is still on earth and the Body of Christ still forming, the two persons are not in power.”

#### IV

The following from the pen of W. J. Erdman, D. D., of Germantown, Pa., is very clear. He is one of the last representatives of that distinguished company of Bible expounders among whom the late Dr. James H. Brookes was a leader, and which included Bishop William R. Nicholson and President W. G. Moorehead, Professors Kellogg and Stifler, Doctors West, Gordon, Parsons and Pierson, and Evangelists Needham and Major Whittle. There were giants in those days, and their summer rendezvous was the Bible Conference at Niagara, of which Dr. Erdman was for years the honoured and efficient secretary.

Coming to the question, “Is the Kaiser the Antichrist?” he says, “No,” for the following reasons:

“1. Because the ‘ten toes’ or ‘ten horns’ do not

now exist in Europe, Asia, Africa, and he rises later from among the horns and is autocrat over all.

"2. No system like the 'Woman Babylon' now exists, to be upheld by the 'beast and ten kings' for a while and then destroyed by them. Papal Rome cannot be the 'Babylon' now; the Pope, in spite of all his claims, is in fact of small account just now.

"3. But the Kaiser and the ambitions of Germany and the War do give the nations a sample of what will come in the days of the 'beast.'

"4. A season of peace will follow this war, in which the Lord will give man another trial in religion and government; but the outcome will be 'Babylon' and the 'Beast.' But I am firm in the belief that the Kaiser does not 'fill the bill' of the Antichrist, whether politically as the 'ten-horned beast,' or doctrinally as the 'two horned,' his minister and miracle-worker.

"Wilhelm II will have to be grayer than he is now to see his Antichrist's day."

## V

We conclude with a brief paragraph from the Rev. Robert Cameron, D. D., of Seattle, Wash., joint editor with the Rev. Mark A. Matthews, D. D., of *Watchword and Truth*.

"As to the Kaiser," he says, "I see no difficulty in answering that. The Antichrist will be at the head of the ten nations; his capital, or rather the center of his political movements, will be Babylon rebuilt; his religious persecutions will have their center in Jerusalem and Palestine. That is per-

fectly plain. Therefore, the Kaiser cannot be the Antichrist. He may be, and is doubtless, in some respects, a foreshadowing of what the Antichrist will be."

Summing up the foregoing therefore, we find that the Kaiser is not the Antichrist for the following reasons:

1. Because the time has not arrived for the Antichrist to appear.

(a) The people, that is the democracy, are not yet in power in the eastern and western portions of the Roman Empire. In other words, the renewed Roman Empire is not yet formed.

(b) The apostasy has not yet come to a head.

(c) The Church has not yet been translated.

2. The Kaiser is making war against some of the very peoples who will give the power to the Antichrist, which contradicts the thought that he could be that person.

3. The Antichrist and the "Beast," if they be regarded as separate persons, arise in the East and not in northern Europe, which precludes the thought of the Kaiser being the Antichrist.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Name and identify the contemporaneous Bible teachers mentioned.
2. How is the Kaiser said to suggest the Antichrist?
3. How should these likenesses be measured?

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4. From among whom will the Antichrist ultimately arise?
5. How do Dr. Scofield and some others distinguish between the "Beast" and the Antichrist?
6. In what marked particular does Dr. Scofield corroborate Dr. Haldeman?
7. According to Mr. Gaebelien what must precede the manifestation of the Antichrist?
8. What in his judgment holds back the apostasy?
9. State in your own words the four points made by Dr. Erdman.
10. Sum up all the answers.

## XXI

### WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT RUSSIA

#### I

**T**HE writer rejoices with Russia in her new-found freedom, and hopes for the day when all classes of her democracy will be thoroughly united in an invincible prosecution of the present war. So far as he can see, such a solution of her present difficulties is essential both to her own welfare and to anything like an early ending of this terrible world-wide conflict.

But after saying this with absolute sincerity and in good faith, he is obliged to add, as a faithful interpreter of the Word of God, that he would not be surprised if the democracy of Russia were short-lived. Not necessarily that this decade nor even this generation should witness its demise, but only that, sooner or later, she will return to some form of monarchical rule. The Bible seems to foreshadow this. And, indeed, that Russia should at length be found in alliance with Germany is not one of the improbabilities, judging from the same source.

#### II

To set this before the reader requires a brief recapitulation of some of the things spoken of in the previous chapters.

For example: our Lord Jesus Christ is to return again from heaven, prior to the introduction of the Millennium upon the earth. This return, as previously stated, is an event of two stages. There is a coming *for* His saints, when the dead shall be raised and the living caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4); and a coming *with* His saints and His mighty angels in judgment upon the living nations and to set up His kingdom on the earth, or in other words, to begin His millennial reign. (See Zech. 14; 2 Thess. 2, and Rev. 20.)

Between these two stages there is an interval, the length of which is not revealed, but which is identified by some with Daniel's "seventieth week," so-called, or a period of seven years at the close of the present age, which that prophet predicted (chapter 9). However this may be, momentous events will be occurring on the earth during that interval, and not a few of them in Palestine and the vicinity of Jerusalem.

In the first place, the Jews will have regathered there in large numbers, and be under the protectorate of some Gentile power.

In the second place, the nations of Europe, formerly constituting the Roman Empire, will have become federated again under a single head, according to Daniel 2 and Revelation 17. There are reasons for believing that one object of this federation is the control of the near East, as it has come to be called, and which includes necessarily Palestine, which Ezekiel calls "the middle of the earth" (38:12, R. V.).



At this point it is that Russia's destiny comes into view, which nation, with her Eastern allies, will also come up against Palestine. Whether this step on her part is at the same time that the Western nations gather there, and for the purpose of opposing them, or whether it is later and after those nations with the Antichrist at their head shall have been overcome, is not determinable, perhaps; but there is no debate among students of prophecy as to the main fact.

### III

The proof of this begins to be seen at the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, where the prophet is told to set his face "towards Gog of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him."

There is no dispute among philologists and archeologists that "Gog" and "Magog" here stand for a powerful Scythian dynasty of Ezekiel's time. Besides this, we have in "Gog" the first syllable of the word "Caucasus," the name of the mountain range crossing the peninsula of Russia, which divides the Caspian from the Black Sea.

In "Rosh" also we have the first syllable of "Russia," while "Meshech" and "Tubal" are the original forms of "Moscow" and "Tobolsk," which were immemorially in possession of that nation. A reliable ancient map placed by the side of a reliable modern one will identify the territories.

But it is a prophecy of divine anger against her and the nations which are allied with her. These

are named as "Persia, Ethiopia and Libya . . . ; Gomer and all his hordes; the house of Togarmah in the uttermost parts of the north, and all his hordes. . . . Be thou prepared, yea, prepare thyself, thou and all thy companies that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them."

"Persia" we identify; "Ethiopia" is thought to mean the present Abyssinia; "Libya" a part of Egypt; "Togarmah" some would identify with Armenia and others with Turkestan.

Germany is not mentioned in this list, indeed, but Gaebelein's commentary on Ezekiel is authority for saying that the Talmud gives that identification to "Gomer." "That the descendants of Gomer established themselves in parts of Germany seems to be an assured fact."

#### IV

But what of the *time* when this shall be fulfilled? As verses 1-7 indicate the nation, so verses 8-12 indicate the time.

It will be "after many days" and "in the latter years," a Hebrew idiom pointing to the close of the present dispensation. But whether or not this is the case, it must be a period still future, for the reason that the military combination referred to in verses 5-7 has not yet appeared in history. Russia with Persia, Egypt and the other nations in her train represents a mobilization of armies which the world has yet to witness.

But, furthermore, it will be the time when Israel shall be gathered again in her own land, and when

she shall be dwelling in comparative quietness and safety (see verses 8, 11, 12).

And now what of the results? What shall be the consequence of this invasion of Palestine on the part of Russia? Read verses 18 to 23 of chapter 38, and 1 to 24 of chapter 39.

God's fury shall come up into His nostrils, and He will not only slay them with the sword but with pestilence, and the forces of nature, such as rain and hailstones, and fire and brimstone, like unto Sodom and Gomorrah.

Two items give a very vivid picture of the terrible-ness of this slaughter. One is that Israel will be seven months burying the dead, and the other that the wooden portions of their accoutrements of war will furnish fire kindlings for seven years.

Prior to the present war, statements of this character would have been considered luridly extravagant; but in the past four years we have become so accustomed to gigantic devastation that they fail to surprise us.

## V

There are certain inferences to be gathered from the above, both of a political and religious nature. The people of God have often been able to read history generations and centuries in advance, and it seems probable that they may do so here.

Of course, dogmatic assertions are out of place, but if our interpretation of Ezekiel be correct, then the present alliance of Russia with the Western nations is not likely to be permanent, for they are of the orig-

inal Roman Empire, to which she never belonged. And for this reason it is more likely that one of these days the relationship of Russia and Germany shall become close, for Germany, like Russia, was never of the Roman Empire, except as to that part of her territory west of the Rhine.

In other words, as Major General Wood has warned us, we are not to expect an unending peace as the result of the present embroilment of the nations. The president of Chicago University said some time ago that certain of the nations entertain piratical policies and intentions, and are willing deliberately to apply them to the weaker peoples. He spoke truly of the past and the present, and there are reasons to feel that he also prophesied of the future; for nations are but aggregations of men, and men are unchangeable in their nature, except by the power of God, through the operation of faith in Christ Jesus.

But is there no hope? Yes, thank God, but it is found in Him and in Him only.

When the prophet asked, "Watchman, what of the night?" the watchman said, "The morning cometh, and also the night." The night first, but the morning afterwards.

To the true believer, the morning comes when Jesus comes to gather His own unto Himself. But although these shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, yet there is promise for the earth also. The judgments to follow will be purifying judgments, until at length the nations of the earth shall learn righteousness, and "the kingdom of the world is be-

come the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

(Note: John Spargo, the Socialist leader and litterateur in an article on "Russia and the World Problem of the Jew," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, June, 1918, says:

"For the moment in this great debacle we are witnessing a gigantic chaos, and the ruin of Russian feudalism seems complete. We must not, however, let this destruction deceive us; the fact remains that there is no evident constructive capacity in the proletariat, and no great and powerful economic interests to inspire a middle class to constructive effort. The only constructive power remaining in Russia, at all likely to be able to restore order from the chaos, is the small group of Liberalists and capitalists. A Bolshevik frenzy may destroy, but it cannot build."

It will be found, we believe, that the constructive elements in Russia will crystallize at length around some form of a limited monarchy.)

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## QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What two expectations or probabilities are expressed for Russia and why?
2. May our Lord be looked for prior to or after the Millennium?
3. Describe the two stages of His second coming.
4. What prophetic period is supposed to fit in between these two stages?
5. Name some of the events that will be then occurring?
6. What will be a chief object for the federation of the nations of the Roman Empire?
7. What description is given by Ezekiel to the Holy Land?

8. What will Russia be planning at this or a later time?
9. In what chapter of Ezekiel is that people brought before us?
10. Name some of the reasons for identifying Russia in this case.
11. What kind of a prophecy concerning Russia have we here?
12. What nations are allied with her?
13. With what modern nations are they identified?
14. What time will this prophecy be fulfilled?
15. What proof of this can you present?
16. Have you read Ezekiel 38 and 39?
17. What inferences are deducible from the foregoing?
18. May we expect an unending peace to follow the present war?
19. What then is our hope?

## XXII

### JERUSALEM'S CAPTURE IN THE LIGHT OF PROPHECY

#### I

**T**HE Christian's pulse beats high these days, and his gaze is upward. Will the clouds soon part and the Lord appear? is the anxious thought of his heart. Some have ventured the opinion that His second coming may be the event that will bring this war to the end. What surprise it would effect in the battling armies, if the members of the Body of Christ were caught up out of their ranks and no dead bodies be left behind!

The capture of Jerusalem by the British and their allies has greatly stimulated this feeling just now. So much has been said about the Jews returning to their own land, and so commonly is it related up to the second coming of our Lord, that the two events have come to be associated as one in the popular mind. But nevertheless they are *distinct and separate*.

In the first place, the capture of Jerusalem may precede, by quite a period, any return of the Jews to Palestine on a large scale. The war must end first and the terms of peace be agreed upon, including the setting aside of that land for the people to

whom it really belongs. Of course, this is going to be done sooner or later, but just when it will be done who can say?

We might take this occasion, however, to speak of a mysterious prophecy in the sixteenth chapter of Revelation which points to it, in the judgment of some. It is the pouring out of the sixth vial "upon the great river Euphrates," whose water is dried up "that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared." The Euphrates is regarded as the symbol of the Turkish power, and its drying up is the receding of that empire from the extensive boundaries of its European and Asiatic domain into the narrower compass of its birthplace, a receding which really began at the rebellion of Ali Pasha in 1820, and has been continuing to the present hour.

"The kings of the East," or "the kings that come from the sunrising" (R. V.), and mentioned in the prophecy, are taken to mean the Jews. F. C. Jennings, in "The World Conflict in the Light of the Prophetic Word," translates the phrase, "that the way of the kings of the rising again of the sun might be prepared." The text is confessedly difficult, and we are unable to say that Mr. Jennings is justified in this rendering; but his observations upon it are interesting at least.

The "sun" in his judgment is here used symbolically of Christ, whose rising again refers to His coming to deliver Israel from her oppressors and to set up His Kingdom on the earth. Malachi's words come into mind, where Christ in His future relationship to Israel is described as "the Sun of



righteousness'' Who shall ''arise with healing in his wings.'' But to quote Mr. Jennings:

''I take it, then, that in harmony with these Old Testament promises, as well as with the tenor or very atmosphere of this book, the Supreme Ruler's—the Sun's—the King's—earthly people Israel is surely to be seen under the term, 'the kings of the rising again of the sun.' It is their way that is prepared by the drying up of the water of the Euphrates; it is for their return to their land that the Gentile that has his foot on Jerusalem is to be pushed back whence he came.

''Now, make of it what you will; say, if you please, that it is but a coincidence, or a series of coincidences; yet it is an evident fact that, as Turkey has been pushed back, so has the Jew gained a footing again in his land. A century ago he could not own a foot of it, or hardly set his foot on it, save under extremely humiliating conditions; to-day there are more than double the number of Jews in Palestine than returned there from Babylon in the days of Ezra.''

## II

In the second place, while the return of the Jews to Palestine—the budding of the fig-tree—may be a sign of the Lord's second coming, it is not necessarily a forerunner of it. The reference now is to that first stage of His coming coincident with the translation of His Church.

In other words, as the writer understands the prophecies, Christ's coming for His Church does not await that return or any other happening. The

capture of Jerusalem sends a thrill through our souls as though He were very near; it makes us feel His nearness as before we did not feel it; and yet if the capture had not been made, it would still be our duty to be looking for His coming at any time.

In other words, the second coming of Christ, as previous chapters have pointed out, is an event of two stages, or a grand drama of two acts: There is a coming in the air for the Church which is His body, and which will be translated to meet Him there (1 Thess. 4:13-18); and then, after an interval, a coming with His saints and His mighty angels in judgment, and for the deliverance of His people Israel from their persecutors.

As this deliverance is to take place in the Holy Land, it is evident that ere that time Israel must have returned there in increasing numbers, and have rebuilt "the waste places" as the prophets have foretold, and even reëstablished their temple worship. But there is time for this between the translation of the Church and the date of its occurrence.

Especially is this true if the Jews continue to return there more and more before the translation takes place, and then complete the repopulation of the land after that event.

It is this thought really that gives the intense interest to the capture of Jerusalem. And yet we would not speculate or contribute to false hopes. Especially would we cultivate the spirit of sobriety, and quietude of heart, and that *patient* waiting for Christ which James, the brother of our Lord, urges with such fervency upon the sojourners of the dis-

persion to whom he wrote: "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

### III

This caution towards sobriety and quietness is very necessary in view of the extravagances to which this hope has led in other days. Even in Paul's time, men were neglecting their business and their ordinary duties because of it. This is why he urges the Thessalonian Christians to "study to be quiet," and to attend to their "own business," and to work with their "own hands," for the very practical reason that they might "walk honestly towards them that are without," and that they themselves might "have lack of nothing."

Wild fanaticism dishonours the Lord whose name we hear, and so do idleness and busy-bodiness, which commonly go with it. Our rent must be met, and our grocer paid, and our families cared for just the same even if the Lord is at the door. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods." As the leaders of our nation warned us when this war began and when some people became hysterical, "This is no time to rock the boat."

And this reference to the war suggests another reason for soberness and fidelity to present duty. Nothing would please the powers of darkness better

than the cry of "Lo, here! or Lo, there!" that might divert the minds of easily excited people from the solemn task that now devolves upon this nation. Even if we Christians were to be caught up to-morrow, it behooves us to remember what our duty is to-day—a duty to the government under which God has placed us, and a duty to the people whom we would be compelled to leave behind.

The people who would be left behind? Oh, the sadness of it! Let us not be so absorbed with the things that are coming on the earth or the glory that awaits the risen saints of God, as to forget the lost and erring that are all about us.

Oh, for the sounding out of the Gospel message in these days! Oh, for the proclamation to go abroad in new and mighty power: "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

"Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Are the Lord's coming for His Church and the return of the Jews to Palestine simultaneous events?
2. What events must precede that return on a large scale?
3. Of what has the Euphrates been regarded as a symbol?

4. According to some, who are meant by "the kings of the East"?
5. How does Mr. Jennings apply the prophecy in Revelation 16?
6. Have you read that prophecy?
7. What spirit should we cultivate while waiting for the coming of Christ?
8. Why should this spirit be cultivated?
9. Have you read 1 Thessalonians 4?
10. What is our duty to the Government in the present crisis?
11. What is our duty to the unsaved?

## XXIII

### WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD STUDY PROPHECY

#### I

**T**HIS chapter is in reply to an inquiry as to the right attitude of God's people towards prophecy, or as suggested in the title, "Why Christians Should Study Prophecy."

1. The most obvious answer is that *prophecy is part of the Bible*, part of God's revelation to man. A Christian, in the New Testament sense of the term, is one who has come to know and love God through faith in the atoning merits of His Son, Jesus Christ. Hence he loves God's Word, and he has not the slightest doubt that the Bible is His Word.

2. But *prophecy covers a large part of the Bible*. We commonly think of the seventeen books of the Old Testament, Isaiah to Malachi, and one book of the New Testament, Revelation, just eighteen books of prophecy in all. And if this *were* all, it would be nearly one-third of the whole. But it is not all. Some of the most important prophecies are in the Pentateuch, the Psalms are largely prophetic, and so is the Gospel of Matthew. One of the most comprehensive and illuminating prophecies is in the

Acts, and what of 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and the Pastoral and General epistles? Taking it in bulk, more than one-half of the Bible is predictive, so that no further reason seems necessary why Christians should study prophecy.

3. *Prophecy has great importance attached to it in the Bible.* God justifies Himself as the God of truth by saying: "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isa. 42: 9).

Why is Jeremiah, though a political prisoner, directed of God to buy his cousin's field in Anathoth? To buy it, even when he knows that Jerusalem is doomed and his nation is to be carried into captivity? To buy it with all the formality of the counting of the money, the signing and sealing of the deed, the calling of witnesses, and the depositing of the papers in safe keeping? This is the answer: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land" (32: 6-15). In other words, Judah was to be restored from her Babylonian captivity and again at the end of this age, and God desired it to be known that it was done by His hand.

"He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he" (John 13: 18, 19). These words of Christ give us the key to prophecy and tell us why Christians should study it. It is revealed so that when it comes to pass we may be convinced that He is the One Whom He claimed to be, the very Son of God,

the Saviour of them that believe and the Judge of the whole earth.

4. *Prophecy in its fulfillment is a great strengthener of faith.* The older apologists classed it with miracles in this respect. They pointed out that miracles furnished the more impressive testimony for the beginning of the Christian era, but prophecy for its close. In other words, prophecy is an argument whose force is continually growing. Beginning when the first prophecy was fulfilled and increasing as fulfillments increase, its maturity will not be reached till the end of the world. As Prof. S. H. Kellogg reminds us, "the whole of the Old Testament was in the hands of the Jews 400 years B. C., and yet their predictions were not only borne out by events in His life and work, but are still in process of fulfillment before our eyes. Nor are the essential facts which bear upon this matter at all affected by modern criticism. Let every book be brought down to the latest date which that criticism claims, and still there is a large residuum of veritable prophecy written long, long before the occurrence of the events foretold."

Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the last book of prophecy was written and during that long period, the leading events of history have proven in a marvellous way that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1-2, 1).

5. *Prophecy strengthens faith because it so greatly increases knowledge.* As the psalmist says: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and



he will show them his covenant" (25:14). Think what prophecy meant to Noah and his family in the building of the ark. Think how it enabled Abraham successfully to intercede for Lot in Sodom. It sustained Moses in leading the Hebrews out of Egypt and Joshua in conquering Canaan. Again and again it nerved Israel's arm for battle by the prediction of victory, and if to-day our people knew and believed the prophecies of God, their fear of Germany would be materially diminished. Daniel knew by the prophetic books the number of years that spanned the Babylonian captivity for His people, and as a scholar and statesman, he stood unequalled among all his contemporaries. Simeon and Anna were diligent students of prophecy and God honoured them with an actual vision of their Redeemer. The poor saints at Jerusalem were relieved in the famine of the period of Claudius Cæsar as the result of Agabus' prophesying. Paul's prophesying in the Adriatic heartened all his fellow-voyagers in their hour of shipwreck.

Some months since, a metropolitan divine uttered a cry of despair over world conditions and the hopelessness of the reformation of mankind; but had he been a closer student of prophecy, he might have spared himself and us part of that despondency. As the late J. D. Herr said at an International Prophetic Conference some years ago: "There is one grand event placed before us on which we can rest our faith and plant our hope amid all the sad disasters and spiritual depressions constantly surrounding the walls of Zion. No seeming defeat of

moral reform, no beating back of the armies of truth, no attempt to overthrow the bulwarks of Christianity, shakes our confidence or paralyzes our aggressive efforts. Beyond and above all these is seen the outshining of His power, and we wait in expectancy and humble patience for the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Here is the objective point of all prophecy."

6. This reminds us that *prophecy, properly understood, is a wonderful inspirer of hope*. In other words, pessimism and Bible prophecy do not go together. It is through the latter that we learn the world's destiny, and become assured that the march of the centuries is towards a legitimate and glorious future. Thus Peter says: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).

He is thinking of Christ's transfiguration on the mount when he says this, which to him was at once a pledge and a specimen of the second coming of Christ in His Kingdom. That event, *i. e.*, the transfiguration, made the word of prophecy more sure. It was "an indubitable declaration of the personal and official glory of Jesus Christ, a sufficient warrant for all that he and the other apostles said concerning Him."

But the point is that in the estimation of the inspired penman, "prophecy" is a "light," a lamp shining "in a dark place." The Greek for "dark" in this instance might be rendered "squalid." O,

the squalor of the filthy, blood-besmirched world to-day! How much it needs light! And the prophetic Word of God is that light. What shall the Church do with it? Hide it under a bushel, or hold it forth for the guidance and the cheer of men? Prophecy is speculation and impractical they tell us; but what can be more contrary to such an idea than the thought of a lamp shining in a dark place?

And if the present state of the world is a "dark place," what is the "day-dawn," if not the second coming of Christ to set up His Kingdom? "He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." This "star-day" is to rise in our hearts, Peter says. There is, in other words, a moral and spiritual rising that must precede the outward splendour of that day to them who shall behold it. Is this true of the reader of these words? Has he yet received Jesus Christ as his Saviour and confessed Him as his Lord? It is as he does this that prophecy becomes to him an inspirer of hope.

7. Thus *Christians should study prophecy because it exalts Jesus Christ*. "To him give all the prophets witness" (Acts 10:43). All prophecy from Genesis to Revelation relates to Him directly or indirectly. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," said He to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and then, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25, 27). The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10). No one interested

either in His past history or His ultimate triumph can afford to ignore its study. "God never would have traced the exalted pathway of His Son through the long aisles of the future, had He not desired and expected us by our eye of faith to follow Him."

8. If prophecy thus exalts Jesus Christ, and by exalting Him strengthens the faith and increases the knowledge and quickens the hope of men, it stands to reason that *it radically affects their conduct*. No surprise is felt, therefore, when we read that the pagans of Thessalonica, "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God *and to wait for his Son from heaven*" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). We see what prophecy did for them. Peter teaches us that by the "exceeding great and precious promises" (prophecy again), we escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:4). John declares that "every man that hath this hope in him" (Christ's Second Coming), "purifieth himself even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3), (prophecy again). Indeed, to quote Dr. Rufus W. Clark of honoured memory in Albany, "there is not a duty pertaining to the Christian life that is not quickened and rendered more imperative by the power of this blessed hope; not a virtue that it does not call into highest exercise, not a motive in the human heart that it does not purify and strengthen."

## II

But if prophecy is, and does all this, why do not Christians study it more generally than they do?

Yankee-like, we answer that question by asking another, "Why do not Christians study the Bible more generally than they do?" If they studied the Bible at all, in any serious way, how could they fail to study prophecy?

Is prophecy too difficult? Will it be said that God sends a message to mock our humble efforts? His answer is that the longest and most difficult prophecy in the Bible is distinguished from every other part of it by the name of "Revelation." If that is a misnomer, God is responsible for it, since it is in the text.

The mistakes and extravagances of theorists are sometimes adduced as an argument against prophecy; but men have wandered away from fundamental doctrines of the Bible and even given "heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons," yet have Christians discarded the study of those doctrines?

The truth is, as Dr. John Lillie, the American Commentator, tells us, that among those who really deserve to be called students of prophecy, there is greater harmony on essential points than is found in other departments of theological science, while their divergences on the other hand are not by any means as mischievous in character or tendency.

A New York clergyman recently said that the Bible Institutes of the country were all teaching the premillennial coming of Christ, and then he sought to disparage the teaching by adding that they were all at variance with one another. Quite the opposite is true. The ten or a dozen Bible Institutes,

or schools, which the writer knows will bear out absolutely Dr. Lillie's testimony.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Name seven reasons why Christians should study prophecy.
2. Define a Christian.
3. Name books of the Bible other than the Prophets so-called, which contain important prophecies.
4. How does prophecy prove God's truthfulness?
5. How does prophecy differ from miracles as a ground of Christian evidence?
6. Name some illustrations of the bearing of prophecy on spiritual knowledge.
7. For what practical reasons should we expound prophecy?
8. Why do not Christians more generally study prophecy?